

THE DIAL

DECEMBER 1925

ADAM URBAS

BY JAKOB WASSERMANN

Translated From the German by Marian Weigall

I FOUND the following story among the records of Chief Justice Diesterweg, a clever criminal expert of the type of the famous Anselm Feuerbach.

At a late hour one October evening, there came to the police station in Gunzenhausen one Adam Urbas, a peasant from the Bavarian village of Aha, and deposed that on that very day he had cut the throat of his son Simon, aged eighteen. He said the boy lay dead in his room at home. The knife with which he had done the deed he had with him, and produced. It was still blood-stained.

This confession, made in a quiet tone and in the fewest possible words, was taken down in writing. To any further questioning by the police officer Urbas refused to reply. The official inspection of the scene of the crime was held that evening, and confirmed his statements. They found his wife half mad with grief and horror, and the farm hands standing about terrified.

Adam Urbas was brought to the jail at Ansbach.

I had been appointed magistrate of this district just a few weeks before, and as a young and ambitious lawyer I was delighted to have charge of the investigation of this matter.

At the beginning the case seemed as clear as day. A peasant of limited intelligence, hide-bound by all the prejudices of his class, had simply got rid of a degenerate son from whom he had suffered

nothing but shame and misery; thus not only executing just punishment upon him, but also avoiding still further troubles which were already brewing.

According to the unanimous testimony of the witnesses, young Urbas had been a completely worthless individual, an idler, never at work, always to be found hanging round inns and at all the country fairs. He had needed a good deal of money for this way of living; and whatever his mother, whom he understood only too well how to terrorize, either did not or could not give him, he knew how to procure by other means. Thus in August he had, without authority, called on the produce merchant Kohn in Weissenburg for eight hundred marks on account of barley delivered, and had kept the money for himself and spent and wasted it all. In Nördlingen he had let himself get caught by a notorious woman, who then declared herself to be with child by him. One day he enticed her to a lonely place and tried to strangle her. Her screams alarmed some passers-by, and she escaped him. The enquiry into this affair was still going on when Adam Urbas himself apparently took the law into his own hands.

Habits and characteristics of Simon's youth were also brought forward, which showed his character in the worst possible light. The wild spirits of childhood led to nothing good. Everything he did was full of evil and cunning. For instance, once the servant bought herself six new linen chemises in the town, and showed her purchases joyfully to her mistress and the others. Then she had to go to Mass, and left the flower-white garments on the table in the kitchen. When she came back, there were the white chemises, so smeared with axle grease that not one of them would ever be wearable again. That Simon was the culprit no one doubted, though it could never be proved, any more than could that other affair with Scharf, the carter. Scharf had pulled up his wagon, laden with sacks of flour, before the inn. When he started to drive on, the flour began to run out in streams along the road; ten or twelve bags had been slashed open by somebody. Of course it was Simon Urbas and no other; but it could never be proved.

To all sorts of dishonest and underhand ways were later added both impudence and brutality; so that all right-minded persons agreed that here was indeed a wild, uncanny weed growing up, so high that no clippers could prune it, so deep-rooted that no hoe

could dig it out. I could have done without half the wealth of evidence that was offered. There was no problem here, no complication, nothing hidden; everything pointed one way, roughly and plainly, as far as the murdered boy was concerned.

The last act of the village tragedy had played itself out on Gunzenhausen's Fair Sunday. Two peasants from Windsbach, talking in the inn at Aha, discussed the fact that a summons had been issued against Simon Urbas. Unnoticed by them, Adam Urbas was sitting at the next table. The landlord and others in the room cast anxious glances at him, for from the way in which he set down his glass and rose from his chair, it was clear that he had not previously heard what had happened in Nördlingen. Simon's shameful deeds were, as a matter of fact, always withheld as long as possible from his knowledge. His peculiarly silent ways, his dignified bearing, and not least the great liking felt for him in the district, helped to create a kind of sheltering wall round him. All these years his wife had always managed to intercept the evil tidings and soften them for his ears. If people imagined from that that he lived in ignorance, or in voluntary half-ignorance, they were mistaken. But he knew exactly how to leave them in doubt as to how much he saw, and what went on in his mind.

His wife had heard of the threatening trouble from a talkative servant-girl, while making the butter. When Urbas came home she went to the window, so as not to have to look into his face. It was already nearly evening, and the bricklayer Franz Schieferer was going by. He called out to her that Simon was down in Gunzenhausen at the White Hart, treating everybody, men and women, and throwing money about like water. "But," he added, laughing, for he was excited, "they'll soon catch the bird all right, the police are already on the way." This was not the case, however, as she learned later; nor at that time was the news of the summons itself anything more than a rumour.

The servants had all gone to the fair. Urbas' wife sank down on the bench against the wall. Urbas was walking up and down the room with heavy tread. Then they heard stumbling steps coming up from the road, and there was a rattling at the door-bell. Fists hammered on the massive door, then came resounding curses. The woman sprang up and wanted to go out. Urbas lifted his finger—nothing more; she stood rooted to the spot. And now

Simon's face showed itself at the window, red from drinking, with eyes full of evil. The woman cried out and signed to him to go away. He disappeared; there was silence for a time; then there was a noise in the outer room. He had got into the house by the door from the courtyard. In the dark he was bumping against the farm tools stored there. There was a crash. The woman tore the door open, and in the sudden flood of lamplight she saw the way the drunken fellow wearily lifted himself up from the floor. Stretching out his arms towards the two in the room, he let out a torrent of horrible insults and abuse.

Perhaps this was a decisive moment for Urbas. She saw him tremble from head to foot. In the meantime Simon had found his way to his room. He slammed the door threateningly behind him; then all was still again. Urbas stood looking into the dark outer room, the woman behind him, her apron pressed to her eyes. For five minutes they remained like this. Then Urbas left the room and went upstairs to Simon's attic.

The woman said afterwards that she suspected and feared what was about to happen, but that her limbs seemed to be frozen and she felt herself powerless the whole time. Whether Simon was so befuddled that he fell asleep the moment he threw himself on his bed, or whether they first talked to each other, the father and son, could not be ascertained. Once she said that everything was quiet; then again, that they had talked to each other, even at some length. But the two doors were shut, and since, according to her own account, she was sitting in the corner by the stove, the sound of voices could not possibly have reached her, as was shown afterwards by experiments. Her statements also about the length of time Urbas remained in the attic were noticeably uncertain. At one time she said it could not have been more than a quarter of an hour; then, again, that it must have been more than an hour. The knife the deed was committed with had not belonged to Urbas, but to his son. Whether the latter had had it on him, or whether it was lying somewhere in the room, it was also impossible to discover. Urbas refused to give any information as to this, and important though the point was, it remained at first obscure.

I must confess that all these incidents, in spite of their gruesomeness, did not arouse much interest in me. They were typical accompaniments of such a crime. There was the father, ruthlessly

obstinate, his peasant's pride wounded, his peasant arrogance recognizing no higher authority than himself; the son, a rogue, whose untimely and violent end one could scarcely regret; and the mother, hesitating between the two. It was the usual constellation, and justice could take its course without coming against any particularly mysterious obstructions.

Gradually, however, by dint of studying closely both the events of the past and the character of Adam Urbas himself, I found my attention being more and more held. It was as if, when walking beside a wall which looked just like all other walls, one presently became aware of certain signs on the stones, at first hardly distinguishable, then clearer and clearer—strange signs and words which somehow compelled one to try to decipher them; so that one went on and on and at last could not stop, passing from one to another and at length acquiring the most unexpected information as to the hidden territory which lay behind the wall.

The marriage of Urbas and his wife had been childless for thirty years. The wife, acquiescent, had accepted her destiny; the husband, however, had rebelled against Nature's decree. He was the last of an ancient peasant stock; the name of Urbas is mentioned even in the Frankish chronicles of the fourteenth century. His pride took it as a disgrace that he should have no heir of his body. What was the use of making and saving, sowing and reaping? What was the house for, with its full chests and bins? Why were there beasts in the stable, why was there fodder in the barns? What were the fields and the meadows for, or the river, the woods, and the mill?

He did not express himself aloud, either to his wife or to any one. He betrayed no feeling when conversation turned on the subject. No hard word or harsh question fell from him all the year round.

But once every month he turned his gaze on his wife; and there was a power in this gaze which came there without intention on his part, which took possession of him, looked forth in spite of himself. It might happen in the fields; then he would stop binding the sheaves, and gaze at her. Or it might be at supper time; he would let the spoon fall on his plate, and gaze at her. Or in the night she would wake up and see him lying there, propped on his arm, and gazing at her. Or in the square before the church she would be standing talking with the other women and suddenly fall

silent, as he came up to within three steps of her and then stood gazing at her. All without anger, without threats, without reproaches; only as if seeking something with those deep, bushy-browed eyes of his, earnestly and long.

Once in every month it happened, and was to be awaited with certainty. At first he did not go near her then. She took this to be a whim. She did not seek to discover what he meant by it. She laughed, she forced herself to make some cheerful remark. Later on she tried to take no notice. But there came hours, and at last whole days, when she fell to endless wondering; and the question she did not dare to put to her husband she put in imagination to his haunting shadow.

Couldn't people speak out to each other, she wondered vaguely; why has one a tongue in one's mouth, if not to say what one wants to? She determined to tackle her husband. Yet when she got to the point of approaching him, her courage failed her. A sense of guilt grew up in her. A voice urged her to speak out; she did not speak out; she felt that she was not guilty, and yet that Something was guilty, and that that Something was in her.

The change of occupations during the spring and summer months brought a certain distraction, but as years went on this seemed to last a shorter and shorter time. Her fear of the peasant's penetrating look each time the blood-sign accentuated her guilt began to numb her thoughts. In winter, from November till February, the stones and beams of the house seemed to contract and press upon her. The air of the rooms was heavy; the sky seemed to be right against the window; evening struck a chill to her heart. The cows lay in a warm rosy vapour, and through the cleft dug in the snow to the byre, in a circle of light from the swaying lantern she carried, went the heavy-footed maid, big with child, to and fro.

She was all body, all dread. The twenty-eight days and nights passed without differentiation one from another. Urbas sat by the stove, his pipe between his teeth; went to the inn; came back in the evening; sat by the stove again and read the paper; got up when the pot of meat and cabbage was brought in; said grace; listened while the others talked. There was nothing secretive in his demeanour; it was not as if he were cherishing a grievance; he was simply silent.

But then came the hour. The woman felt it ahead in every part

of her, even in her hair. A door would open, and he would be standing there—in the morning, or in the evening, in the parlour, or in the barn, it was all the same. There he stood, with that inscrutable look. No sound in his throat, no gesture, no word—only that look, saying "Why not? Why everyone else, and not you? Why does your field lie barren?" Twelve years went by like this, and then the woman's strength gave out. Her temper became gloomy. At night she lay sleepless. She thought she saw the peasant's eyes burning in the dark, even while he slept. When she heard his step during the day, she crept into a corner of the barn and cowered, trembling, till calls for her echoed from all sides. She let her hold of household things relax; the servants grew slacker.

She denied herself to him. She shuddered before his embrace. It seemed to her darkened senses that if she did not give herself to him he could not demand anything. She became cold to the touch, cold in the blood; the woman in her froze. Then, however, Urbas began to woo her. It was something she had never known before. Not with words did he woo her, but rather with shy service. Often there was something suppressed about him, as if she had hidden herself and he was seeking her and could not find her. He was like a suffering animal. For a year or longer this went on, and then in time the woman's dread of him disappeared, as she saw that she was not to him merely a creature to be caressed and fed after her day's work was done, but that she represented something else, worthy of being consulted and honoured. Her flesh melted towards him again. A month later she was with child.

As soon as there was no doubt about this, her whole being changed. She hastened about the house with youthful steps, drove the lazy laughingly to work, and helped with everything herself, chattering, bright, expansive. Everyone was amazed. Urbas himself wondered. She did not want to tell him straight away what was in store; she wanted to do it solemnly in some way, as if she were bringing him a gift. On Good Friday she put on her best dress, and the big black silk head-dress with the silver pins; then she called Urbas into the upper room where the old cupboards were, full of the family silver and china, the inheritance of centuries. She sat down solemnly in the arm-chair, folded her hands on her lap, and told what she had to tell, shortly and simply.

A shudder ran through Urbas' powerful frame. (When she

spoke of this hour nineteen years later, and thought of this confession and of how Urbas had taken it, one could see her experiencing again the same trembling sensation she had felt at the time.) His earth-brown face became as red as a poppy. He let out a great hoarse laugh. Then tears streamed from his eyes. He went over to her—pressed her so roughly to his breast that she cried out. Distressed that she did not take as a caress what was meant as such, he patted her on the back, tenderly, almost reverently, and made a melodious murmur in his throat.

He gave the strictest orders that she should take care of herself. He went secretly to the doctor and asked for advice. He hired an extra servant to save her from having to work. He waited on her and moved things out of her way. When the baby-clothes were being sewn he sometimes sat looking on with wondering eyes, nodding his big head.

Everything came to pass in due course, even the hour that ended the nine months of waiting. Long Urbas held the new-born child in his hands, and long he looked at the miserable formless thing, joy and apprehension struggling for mastery in his face.

Simon grew up like other country children. Things were not made specially easy for him. They did not want him to know how long and eagerly they had waited for him. Anyhow, an acute observer could have perceived an uneasy tension in Urbas then, as if he were trying to listen to the very circulation of the boy's blood.

The listening look remained with him. It engraved itself in deep wrinkles on his face. Though it might seem that he paid no attention to what Simon did or said, this was not so. No one who knew him realized with what exactitude he saw everything. But I learned it. I learned it in a way which is to me unforgettable, and yet not easy to pass on to others with the poor words at my command.

Part of Adam Urbas' very being was a high idea of the relation of father and son. He felt himself a peasant to the core, which means that he felt himself a king. The earth was his earth, the labourer his labourer. The seasons were created for him and for his fields and for his harvest. He knew himself lord over the land. His eye took it all in, up to the boundary-stone which had stood for generations unmoved. There was no blade of grass which did not grow up in his name. Property was a sacred thing, and property demanded a master to guard it and rule over it, concerned with

every penny and with every sack of corn. A son inherited it from his father, a father gave it to his son, through all the ages. Such was the natural order of things; the world would be incomprehensible otherwise.

But I am going too fast, and must not lose my thread.

The formal cross-examination which I had to give Urbas in the course of my duty led to no result. His answers were all the same, and to have to keep repeating them was evidently strange and burdensome to him. He confined himself to the bare facts; he would explain nothing. He disdained to defend himself, and would hear nothing of taking legal counsel. To suggestions or advice he opposed an obstinate indifference. When I put it to him that he could obtain considerable amelioration of his punishment by a voluntary confession of the motive of his crime, he answered laconically, "That is not the point." I decided to give up this fruitless interrogation, particularly as the statements of the witnesses, and what I myself knew of the characters of the murdered boy and the accused, had already supplied me with a complete chain of motives.

There were, however, two uncertain points which so far had not been cleared up. One was the doctor's verdict on the corpse as found on the scene of the murder. The way the body lay showed not the slightest trace of force having been used, either in the position in which the limbs had stiffened or in the clothing or in the expression of the face. If it had not been for the peasant's own confession it would have been very hard to prove murder at all. The second point was in connexion with the undisputed fact that the knife had belonged to Simon. The peasant stated that it was in Simon's belt, and that he had simply drawn it out; but this admission he only made after a long time and under pressure. It did not bear the stamp of truth, and as a matter of fact the next day he revoked it and said that the knife lay bare on the table, and that Simon had been cutting bread with it in the morning. When I could not refrain from expressing my surprise that his statements on such an important point should vary, he looked uncomfortably at the ground. It was the only time I thought I perceived him disconcerted in any way.

I felt an imperative call to force this rigid silence. My thoughts were occupied almost unceasingly with the man. The apparent clearness of the case, and the obstinacy with which it haunted me,

tortured me. A voice was continually saying in my ear, "This man is no murderer; this is not a man who went in to another and cut his throat as one would slaughter an animal, or who with horrifying brutality made himself into the executioner of his own son." Yet there it remained. What was it that had really happened? To the question as to how long he had stayed in the room he had always kept silence, or at the most shrugged his shoulders. Only at the last cross-examination did it slip from him, almost as though against his will, that he thought it might have been half an hour. What had happened in this half hour? He divined my thoughts, and his brow darkened.

I saw no way of escape from this state of tension and anxiety but to leave the scene of justice and go to him squarely as man to man. I fancied that I had won from him a certain trust in me. When I showed that I was anxious not to handle a delicate point roughly, I thought I detected a sort of gratitude in him. The only thing that made me still hesitate was the consideration that perhaps the inborn distrust of an intruder from an outside sphere might so operate that from the outset there would be no means of our getting into natural communication with each other. But I felt encouraged when I thought of the man's personality. Adam Urbas was not the ordinary sort of peasant. He belonged to our peasant aristocracy, his mere bearing betrayed intelligence and nobility of mind; and I hoped therefore that I would not try to approach him in vain. I debated with myself no longer. It was a December evening when I went at length to the prison and got them to unlock the cell where Urbas was.

I had procured certain favours for him in the prison. The room was bearable, decently furnished with a wash-stand, bed, and mirror, and comfortably warm. He was sitting by the lamp, and had the Bible open before him. I said good evening, took off my coat, hung it on the door, and sat down opposite Urbas at the table.

Each time I saw him his look struck me afresh. It did so now. He was as massively built as a bull. His head had the bullet-roundness of the native South-German; but his skull showed, especially in the formation of the temples, the signs of ancient breeding, for the bones there were strikingly thin and the skin parchment-like and almost transparent. The mouth was broad, with firm thin lips, and the nose aquiline, with a high bridge. The

carefully shaved face was like that of some old actor. The hands were those of a giant. The heavy-lidded eyes seldom opened very wide, but when they did their gaze had a surprisingly piercing quality which even I found it not easy to endure.

To lead up to the conversation, I said I had felt for a long time that I wanted to seek him out, only not in my official capacity; that I came, if he would let me, just as a friend who had somehow been allowed to visit him. He had, as a fact, I said, been confided to my care and I was responsible for his welfare.

He looked at me in silence. After some time he said, "Very kind of you."

"I don't want you to take it like that," I said, with a gesture of protest; "I would like you not to go on being mistrustful of me. One is mistrustful of a magistrate involuntarily. You think, well, if he isn't coming as an official to get the papers filled in, he is coming out of curiosity, simply to pry. But my purpose is neither of these. The papers are practically finished with. We are ready now for the trial. There is not much room for curiosity on my part; it seems to me that I know everything already. I don't quite know myself why I've come, but I had to, I felt it was my duty."

Again Urbas did not answer for a long time. Then he said, "I believe you."

I seized on this. "If you believe me, then," I said, "we can talk over what has happened like good friends."

Urbas considered. Then he said, "What is the use of talking about it? It's bad enough that it had to happen."

"That's just the question," I broke in; "*Did* it have to happen? *Have* to?"

He lifted his head, though his eyes remained downcast. "It would be presumption," he said, "to question that."

"But not only is there doubt about it," I persisted, "but society disclaims your deed and is horrified at it. If everyone wanted to decide what was right in such a case according to his own idea, there would be no end to horrors, we would be living like wild beasts. How you will justify yourself to your own conscience, and to the highest judge of all, is not my affair. But your obligation to society remains."

Urbas shook his head. "What can talking do to alter anything?" he murmured indifferently.

"Things must be set straight between you and your fellow men," I said; "and as long as you persist in this obstinate silence, everything is still a wretched muddle."

"But if one can't find words for things?"

"Can't one really, or does one perhaps refuse to, out of defiance, or out of pride?" I retorted; "Ask yourself that."

He said, "I am awkward at talking, I'm not used to it."

His brow had clouded. I saw that I might not probe further. I waited. At length something came in a mutter from the depths of his chest—"It was I who made the boy." His gaze was fixed on the floor. "If I made him, hadn't I the right to destroy him?" he asked, with a strange sort of angry cunning. "You people can argue that as much as you like," he went on; "but if someone brings a person to life, then he has the right to destroy him again, if it turns out to be only a misery that he was ever born. I was determined to have him; I dragged him, forced him, out of his mother's body. Other women bear their fruit for nine months within them. Of her you might say that she bore hers thirteen years. I demanded him from her, I demanded him from God. I made him mine before he was ever here. All this, and this, I thought, you will be to me. Like a lump of clay that one takes out of the ground and kneads and moulds according to one's own wish! Suddenly you see that you have nothing but vain dirt in your hands; then you throw it away again, back to the earth you took it from."

That angry, cunning note grew stronger. He appraised me through half-closed eyelids. "But it only became clear by degrees," I said, "that it was fated to come to no good."

He interrupted with a lordly gesture. "It went wrong from the beginning, the whole thing. His blood was wrong. I smelt it even with my nose. Others, even of bad stock, they grow up without any one taking much trouble about them, *they* don't go wrong. If they are bent a little crooked at the start, time straightens them out. But with him, whatever was crooked grew crooked. I soon saw that disaster was bound to come of it. And so it did. A grain of corn every day—in the long run, a mountain. I stood and asked myself, what was this growing into? If you dug it up in one place, it grew twice as high in another; if you seized it, it slipped through your fingers. There was nothing to be done."

"But couldn't poor seed be made to thrive through careful tending?" I suggested. "Did you ever try to awake his conscience? Did you try seriously to discipline him?"

Urbas raised his heavy eyelids for the first time, and in his eyes there was a distracted look. "Sir," he answered roughly, "one can't control the elements. If you can't do it by looks, you can't do it by words, I said to myself; if example does nothing, beating won't do anything either. In the way you mean, the wife did her part. A woman understands that best. But if he didn't see that my voice was speaking there too, what was the use of it? If he couldn't hear what I conveyed to him without speech, the words of the prophet himself would have been empty sound for him. That's what I said to myself. Where I went ahead, he could surely have followed; when I went behind, he could have turned round. But no, he didn't see me, didn't hear me. It would revolt me to grab hold of someone and shout at him, 'Be good! Behave yourself!' How can that make any one better, when goodness isn't in his nature? Discipline can only be of use where the worm is not already at the root."

"But how could you know that for certain?" I asked—with some hesitancy, for his words and voice had a sinister power; "Were you then so absolutely convinced of your own infallibility?"

He stretched his hand across the table and answered, breathing heavily, "When my own flesh and blood rises up against me, can I argue with him as I would with a cheating tradesman? When from the seed that I sowed a brood of serpents spring up, that come hissing at me with their poisoned tongues, can I go for them with a stick like a schoolmaster? There's no sense in that, no human dignity. When someone on whom one has staked one's whole future turns out rotten all through, incurably, so that he brings nothing but ruin to house and home, what is one to do? Can one give him new bones, or breathe new brains into him, or a new heart?"

His whole powerful face trembled and flamed. This man who for so long, for a lifetime perhaps, had refrained from expressing himself in speech, was now tearing his heart open before my eyes, and had at his command words, tones, and metaphors which amazed me, filled me almost with fear. Yet I had suddenly an unavoidable impression that it was not to me he was addressing himself; that what he was really doing was to defend himself, not for the

first time, against the reproaches of some insistent, unseen presence. I felt as if everything he was saying in answer to me had been heaped up for a long time like glowing embers within him, and that now the fire was bursting forth, pouring itself out of him. He could not prevent it; and while this mighty force, so long suppressed, got itself uttered, he seemed to be sitting by, grim and troubled, dully listening.

His voice rang more quietly however, as with bent head and chin set he continued: "It might be asked, When did I begin to know everything, and when did I first give up hope? You might as well ask a leper, When did you first know that your skin was beginning to fester? Of course he knows it on the first day, but he only believes it when he is confined to his bed. I lay awake, night after night; I thought, and thought; I looked closely at myself, I looked closely at him. I considered this, considered that. I peered and peered, seeing where the leprosy had eaten its way in. I tortured my very soul, wondering how the evil was to be got hold of. Discipline! Discipline is always one step too late, since the evil that calls for it is always one step ahead. If I had beaten him black and blue the rod would have broken in my hand, and the wales on his back would only have hardened him. Should I have laid down rules for him? What rules, then? Are there any rules that we can really trust to? Should I have chained him up like a dog? Everything that I was fighting against in him was mine really; I was the tree, he the branch; I was the wick, he the flame; I was the ground, and he the spring that wells from it. How can the tree accuse the branch? The same sap runs in both. Or the wick the flame? The flame only exists through it. Or the soil the water, when that springs from its very self? And where does evil come from, then? There it is, spreading like fire in dry wood; but whence? What a pitiless course it takes! First the little lie, then the big; first a penny stolen, then a shilling; first an animal maltreated, then a human being; from idler to criminal, from good-for-nothing to profligate. No respect, or faith, or sincerity, or love. Well, where did he get all this? From me? It can only be so. And then I asked myself, Urbas, out of what stuff of darkness were your own soul and body created, that you could bring forth this rotten, misbegotten thing into the world? Is man then really

nothing but worthless vermin, that can only reproduce vermin in its turn?"

He stared at me with a fixed look, like one choking under an impossibly heavy burden. There was silence. He drew his arm across his forehead, wiping the moisture from his brow. I was aware of his emotion, and shared it; but at the same time I reproached him for his presumption, and this I could not refrain from expressing.

"To ascribe such immense responsibility to oneself seems to me to go too far," I said; "Even at the call of duty one can take too much upon oneself and overstep man's right. You have referred everything to yourself alone—as man and as father, always only to yourself. Where does the mother come in, though? She has an equal claim on the child, a greater, even. She would not approve of your reasoning, and certainly not of your deed, for the sake of which you have had to break every family tie."

"We can't argue that," answered Urbas, unmoved. "There comes a point where one has to leave off thinking. Whether she approves of my reasoning I don't know. She has come off badly, but I have, too. Her suffering may be great, but mine is the torture of the damned. If there is nothing left for her in life, still, my life was poisoned already years and years ago. It was as though her body gave up its fruit unwillingly and then took revenge on my foolish impatience and pride. We have only just to understand Nature; but that of course is exactly what we fail to do. We want to improve upon her, and are always beating against barred gates like butting rams. A woman should never have only one child; too much hangs upon it. My mother had nine; seven of them died anyway. My grandmother had sixteen, and eight of these died young too. There is no bitterness in such deaths. Not every seed germinates of the corn sown in the fields. One should not have an only child. It's like staking everything on a lottery—only no, that's no comparison, for here one is scorched by a fire that leaves a burning pain for ever. If her one and only treasure is despised by gods and men, a mother is sad, perhaps, her life is clouded; nevertheless she is for ever and aye so wrapped up in him, that even if he approached her with an uplifted ax in his hand, his life would still seem to her of more value than her own. She

doesn't care about good or evil; her blood cries out to her louder than any such distinctions. While I . . . 'Father,' the creature called me. What does that word 'Father' mean? I have tried and tried to think what it really means. If I had gone in to the servant in the night and begotten a son from her, it would have called me 'Father,' too. Would it have been the same? It would not have been the same. It might even have been all right then, that might have been the son I longed for, honourable and decent. But the law forbids it, and the law is holy. And would that have made the woman my woman? No. I will say this: a man aspires farther than a woman, reaches up and out farther than she does. I'll say this too: the father's share of responsibility is greater than the mother's. The mother sits at our Lord's feet, and she may not be harmed. It's from the father that the reckoning is asked. The father is the bearer of the race; he is the link in the chain, to which all his ancestors have led up and from which all his descendants will spring. He has not only himself to please, by tenderness and caresses, for out of his son's eyes the country is looking at him, the king is looking at him, his ancestors are looking at him; besides all who come after, to the third and fourth generation. His son is lent to him as a pledge, one might say, that he has to give back to the world when the time falls due. Woe unto him who must come with empty hands and say, I have betrayed the trust!"

He stared into space, got up from his chair, and repeated loudly, "I have betrayed the trust!" Then he sat down again.

I did not dare to disturb the heavy silence into which he fell after that. I ransacked my brain for a way that would lead us further. Every minute I was growing surer of my case, but I was afraid. There was now such a conviction within me that incidents of the past which had hitherto only borne out vague guesses and suppositions were beginning to acquire the force of certainty, and picture fitted itself to picture in a clearer and clearer light. Without doubt, some subtle emanation from the man himself who sat before me contributed to this, and also to my fear. In spite of long experience as a lawyer and judge—or possibly by reason of this—I have seen much of the power that lies in abnormal emotion to impart itself to others. I cannot deny that the intensified capacity I now felt within myself seemed to arise from this cause. There was something great about the man. I felt I had scarcely the right to

make myself master of his secrets; I hesitated; I could not find the right words. At length however I broke the deep silence, and, leaning across the table, I asked, "You went up to the attic in order to make an end of things?"

He did not answer. His closely shut lips seemed to be refusing to let any further words through. Yet to me this fierce brow was becoming clear as a book, and I was seeing into what lay behind.

"You were twice in the room," I suddenly began, at a venture—or perhaps that is not so, perhaps it was not quite at a venture, but under the impression of a vivid vision which the moment brought me. "Twice," I repeated; "when you left the room the first time, Simon was still alive; when you went in the second time, he was already lying a corpse on his bed."

I should never have thought that this peasant's face, which was by nature brown as seasoned wood, could ever grow so white. The pallor seemed actually to come out of the pores and overflow the skin as with a film of chalky white. He stared at me with wide eyes, his cheeks quivered, and he seized his throat with both hands. Now there was no uncertainty left in my mind. I forced myself to speak calmly, and went on, "You went to him to bring him money. On the Sunday you had had no money in the house, and borrowed two thousand marks from your neighbour Stephen Buchner, directly after dinner. Isn't that so? The money was to be for getting Simon away. He was to go to a seaport that very evening, and from there to America. Isn't that so? You offered him the money, you explained your plan to him, and you expected him to obey without hesitation. But not only would he not obey, he even rejected the money. You questioned him, and then he began to speak. What he said at first was muddled and incoherent, for he was still dazed with drink. Then the sense became clear, at any rate to you, frightfully clear. You stood before him and said nothing. You didn't even take it amiss that he lay there in bed and talked into the air, because you knew that he would not have had the courage to speak if he had had to look into your face. You listened, simply listened; and everything else arose out of this. Did it happen like that, or not?"

Urbas turned his agonized gaze for one second from my face. "You must have been there as a ghost in the house," he stammered, utterly bewildered.

"No," I answered, "these are simple conclusions drawn from facts. The most improbable facts leave often the clearest traces behind them. Don't think there's any magic in it. In every direction, the consequences of a man's action follow inscrutable natural laws. When one throws a stone into water, the circles it makes widen out and disappear, but movement can still be detected in the water long after the eye has ceased to be aware of it. No one can escape this fact. Every step he takes, in any direction, or whatever he touches with his hand or breathes upon with his breath, winds the net more closely round him. I possess one piece of evidence which I did not lay much value on at first; only now, in the course of time, I see its importance. There is a painter in Eichstadt called Kiessling, a friend and accomplice of Simon's, a lazy, degenerate fellow, not without a certain rough honesty. He told me a good deal. As you will remember, one of the pretty old painted china coffee-pots disappeared from your house last winter. You and your wife both thought that Simon had appropriated it and sold it to a dealer in the town, for it was a fairly valuable thing. Your wife even expressed the suspicion that Kiessling had played his part in this as receiver. Well, it is true that Simon took the pot; equally true that Kiessling was concerned and would certainly not have despised his share of the booty, if there had been any question of that. But it never came to that. Simon smashed that pot before his friend's eyes. They were together in the latter's room, there in the Pleinfelder Chaussée. Simon had brought the pot to Kiessling, who took hold of it to examine it and was about to express his satisfaction when Simon wrenched it from him and with all his force threw it on the floor. Of course it broke into a thousand pieces. The other reproached him angrily; but Simon, after staring darkly before him for a while, suddenly burst out, 'I should like to do him some real hurt, once and for all, that he would feel to his very bones!' Kiessling didn't know against whom this outburst was directed; his acquaintance with Simon was at that time of quite recent date. Later things grew clear to him. He says he had never before seen any young person obsessed with such a violent hatred for his own father. From time to time similar attacks repeated themselves. An irresistible fury would come over him, an impulse to destroy; or at another time it would be a fit of utter misery, of melancholy brooding. Often it seemed to be not hate, but fear; often not fear, but something much less definite.

One expression he once used, testified to by a third person also, was somewhat as follows, 'If I could only just say it straight out to him, then I should feel all right!' What could he have meant by this? Not only Kiessling, but other people who knew him, speak of him as not altogether bad. They are mostly people whose unprejudiced judgement can be trusted. They describe him as a weak character, easily led, like a person with no roots; indulging in all sorts of excesses, like someone who wants to numb himself; and avoiding work, like someone continually in flight from something and feeling himself followed. It was as if he turned to crime as an escape from inward desolation, without being by any means wholly bad. And I myself judge him to have been like this, now. But by whom then did he feel himself followed? Whom was he defying? What was he trying to numb within himself? Urbas, I think we both know what it was. Even if the whole world were still in doubt about it, you and I would be sure. Till that evening in his attic you didn't know it. But you learned it there."

He drew a deep breath; his face twitched, as if from a blow within; he seemed to want to say something, and to be unable. But the lights and shades of his angular, agitated face spoke of themselves. The dark horror, the almost superstitious amazement over the sudden unveiling of that which he had thought to be an inviolable, ever-guarded secret, had fallen away from him; and now, since he no longer had the secret to guard, his soul was relieved of a heavy burden, and expressed itself by that deep breath in a moving way. I felt myself bound to help him over the last remaining difficulties. I said, "When you come to think of it, men have a much worse time of it than animals have. Men misunderstand one another in both thought and action: brother, brother; friend, friend; father, son. Everyone lives within his own misunderstanding as if in a black cellar, but is so strangely blind as to think his cellar a brightly lighted room. And when he thinks that God has taken note of him and chosen him out to be His mouth-piece, it turns out as a rule to have been the devil after all. For thirteen long years your whole aspiration was centred on your son; then, when he was actually there, it took you eighteen years to understand him. Isn't that rather a poor showing for human wisdom? Why hide yourself any longer, Urbas? What good can it do, to take the blame for a crime which you didn't commit? To call yourself a murderer to the very man who is trying to show you

the final way plainly? Why this impious playing with earthly justice? Oh, why, man, why?"

"I'll tell you why," said Urbas, "since now the whole game is lost. I'll tell you about it, but have patience with me, it's hard for me." His glance seemed to seek within, and his fingers moved as if they too were seeking the briefest and exactest words to which to entrust his thought. Haltingly, he began. "It is true, I went in to him to give him the money. I didn't think of America, I only thought, let him get away as quickly as possible, and as far as possible, so that we should at least be spared the police in the house. I went in to him, and because it was dark in the room I had first to light the candle, and there he was lying on his bed, looking at me. It's true that he wouldn't take the money. He turned his face to the wall and ground his teeth and said that couldn't help him any more. I stood by the bed and said, 'Get up, when your father is standing before you.' Then he turned his face towards me again, and because mockery and contempt were in it, anger welled up in me, and I said, 'Get up, when your father is standing before you.' But he answered, 'Why should I get up, when it is you who have thrown me down?' My fists clenched themselves of their own accord, and I asked, 'How then, you villain, how can I have thrown you down?' And again came from his lips that 'You!' Nothing more. 'You!' he said. I looked at him, and he looked at me, and time passed, and then again he said 'You!' There was so much spite and rancour and menace in the word, that the saliva in my mouth turned bitter as I heard it. 'What do you mean by *you*? What do you mean?' I cried. 'Oh, you,' he said through his teeth, 'you have had your whole weight on my chest ever since I was born.' Then I was silent. 'It is all very well for you to stand there and glare at me with those eyes of yours,' he went on. 'So it's never going to end, then, that standing and glaring at me with those eyes? It has always been like that with you, always. Looking and looking, and never saying a word; sitting day after day at table, and knowing all about a fellow, and never saying a word. A long way you've brought me, with your looking and looking! Why didn't you take me and talk to me? Never said a single word to me. Of course that would drive any one to despair! Wouldn't it just force him to turn to harlots and drinkers, people who talk and laugh and have a friendly word for a fellow, who say *Hullo* there! so that one knows where one

stands with them. But you! Have I ever known where I stood with you? There he is again on the watch, I was always thinking; he has planned something against me, I was always thinking. Even when I was still only a child, the food I was swallowing would stop in my throat and choke me when you came in at the door. Hundreds and hundreds of times I wanted to go to you, but fear of you prevented me. What have I done wrong? I was always thinking; and when I thought of something I felt better, because then at least I knew what it was all about. So I never had any peace until I had found something wrong to do, and made everybody angry. Yes, I've gone all wrong; but I don't know whether I was really wrong from birth. I've turned out a failure, a good-for-nothing; but that's no reason for you to set yourself up there like the Holy Ghost before me, you ought rather to ask yourself where you've failed towards me. For it might have been quite different. I might have honoured you, as it says in the Ten Commandments, and been as tame as a pet bird. It might have been like that, because it was in me, and simply got driven out. I've grown into a useless wretch, and life is a misery to me, and wenches and drinking are a misery to me, and nothing at all is any good to me any more.' That's what he said, and more yet, I've forgotten what; and tossed himself about on the bed, and ground his teeth, and cried, and gave a bitter laugh; and at last turned again to the wall and was silent. I thought to myself, Urbas, that is a lost soul, but it may be that your own is too. I hadn't a word to say. What use would it have been to have whined to my own son? I hadn't a word to say. I went out. I walked across the yard as far as the fence. Everything was as peaceful as it is in spring nights, when the sap begins to form in the roots under the earth. I looked up at the stars, but they could not help me. I opened the stable door and sniffed the sour, warm air, and one of the oxen lifted its head, going on chewing. Then a shudder of horror overran me, and I thought, Urbas, you must go back into his room, and even if you don't find the right words straight away, surely something will come of it. Then I went back, and as I came in, he was already lying there in his blood. I stood there a long time, and then I said to myself, Well, if that is how it was, you are the murderer, Urbas, and the debt is yours to pay. That's all I have to tell."

He folded his hands over the open Bible, and went on in a quiet

tone and with a curiously overshadowed look. "One thing more," he said, "I had a dream which I want to tell you about. It was the night before that happened. The farm servant came into the parlour and said, 'Farmer, the horses are harnessed, we must start.' I went out. There was deep snow lying. The horses were standing harnessed to the wagon, and I drove off. All at once we lost the road, and the horses were wading in water up to their bellies. I jumped down and walked beside them, holding the reins. Then I suddenly saw the farm behind me burning, and the snow-field gleaming with the red reflected light. The horses began to run, and dragged me after them, so that I lost my breath. I couldn't let go of the reins, they were twisted round my hand; and as we came to the old mill, down there by the railway bridge, where the river is sixty ells wide and more than ten deep, the horses began to gallop more wildly than ever, and the glare from the fire lit up the whole sky. The river was frozen over, the horses ran on to it, and I thought in my fear, 'Will it bear the weight of the wagon and horses?' The heavy draught horses rushed down the bank and on to the ice with the wagon, but the ice held. There stood Simon on the other bank, and as the beasts were rushing on down the frozen roadway, I called across to him, 'Help, Simon!' He answered, 'I must go home, the stable and the house are burning.' And I, I couldn't jump into the wagon, and the horses were dragging me off my feet. I cried out in direst need, 'Help, Simon, loosen me from the reins!' He answered, 'You must loosen yourself from the reins, the ice won't bear us both.' Then I called to him, 'Everything will be yours, horses and wagon and all, only help me, for God's sake!' Then he turned round, and as he turned, the horses stood still. When he took the first step, however, the ice cracked, and as he seized the panting leader by the bridle, the ice broke, and wagon and horses and myself and Simon crashed into the water. And while I was sinking, I awoke."

He ceased. He did not expect any further reply, and I had none to make. I noticed with surprise how in the course of a few minutes his whole appearance had grown years older, his chin become sharp, his eyes dull, his neck thin, his hands withered, his bearing weak and helpless. The striving, powerful being, asking so much out of life, who had been sitting before me, had suddenly become a shrunken old man. When I took my leave he did not look up and seemed hardly to notice. The stony silence in which all his

former life had been passed seemed to spread itself about him again, impenetrable, and almost like the first breath of Death. For on the next morning, when he was to be set free, the warder found his lifeless body hanging to the window-bar.

THE POET TAKES LEAVE

BY SCOFIELD THAYER

Written at Atlantic City

The stars are mine; and the inalienable sea.
They may expunge me from their continent, and be
As I were not. Deliberate deformation here
Has turned the centuried earth as milk is turned. The mere
Rotation of this day addles the heart. O wry
The morning, wry the noon, and wry the eve and night!
Wrenched from their natural course they do but underwrite
Man's infamy. The stars alone hold true, and are
The asylum of my self. And the most stooping star
Yet gleams untrammelled. These they shall not bend
To their unholy uses; nor to-morrow vend
Their goings. They shall move unsullied when man dies;
And all his evil with him; for the last time dies.

The sea is also mine. Across his heart they ride,
And shall to-morrow curb his inmost pulse and tide,
And turn his salt to sweetness. Yet I know him friend.
There is that in him which may nowise mix or blend
With their sweet horrors. He is ribbed and coarse and true.
And party to that salt-good scheme whereof hearts firstly grew.

LONDON STATUES

BY ROGER FRY

AS fundamentalism has driven men to the study of evolution, the row over Mr Epstein's relief of which I wrote recently has prompted me to look more curiously at London's statues. There can be no doubt that on the whole the Philistine lords have arranged things very skilfully so as to avoid any disquieting artistic impressions occurring in the streets and spaces of their capital city, and I should hardly venture to disturb the reigning harmony by calling attention to the few statues which have some artistic purpose, did I not know that they are too familiar to the Londoner ever to be seriously regarded. The present moment is propitious, too, for any enquiries, since it is the one season when one may stand and gape at a statue and only pass for an American visitor instead of being suspected of lunacy.

Most cultured Londoners when challenged to mention one good statue in their metropolis point to Charles I in Trafalgar Square. The seventeenth-century pedestal of this monument is one of the few exquisitely proportioned structures in London. The baroque decoration of the two rounded ends is also very happy, owing to a good original design which has been singularly improved by the curious accidental enrichment wrought by the acid smoke of London on Portland stone. By this chance the original plastic idea has been enormously enriched and emphasized, and it has gained a rare variety of surface quality. The statue of the unfortunate king is, however, hardly worthy of this splendid pedestal. It has of course something of the decorative quality which was traditional in all renaissance bronze work. The sculptor has made use of the creases in the leather jack-boots, the details of the mane and tail, and even the veins of the horse, not to mention the details of the armour, but all these are treated in a tight and literal manner and are imposed on a feeble and uncertain plastic theme without any consistent or well-held rhythmic idea. On a small scale it might make a charming *biblot* for the mantelpiece. As it is, the feeblest of Italian renaissance sculptures would make it look foolish.

Far better as an example of the peculiar decorative effect of bronze which the renaissance evolved is Grinling Gibbons' statue of James II behind the Admiralty. The pseudo-classic pomposity of the imperial pose and the affectation of the Roman costume are easily forgiven for the sake of the exquisite clarity and incisiveness of the imbricated corselet, and the various graven and modelled ornament for which that costume provided an excuse. But the head and bare limbs have also a nervous precision and accent which no other English sculptor has quite equalled. The general effect resembles that of the Italianizing French sculptors of the later seventeenth century, but I doubt if any of Louis XIV's artists had quite the refinement of taste that Gibbons shows.

Far less decorative than either of these, but more convincing as a plastic idea, is the George III in Cockspur Street done by Wyatt in 1836. It is a matter-of-fact affair enlivened by the rather conventional rhetorical pose given to the horse, but it is an honest and capable piece of sculpture. Wyatt has made happy use of the king's ridiculously small bullet-head. By means of the peruke he has joined this knob to the rounded shoulders by an unbroken curve which counters and contains the strong opposing diagonals given by the horse's checked movement. One guesses that Wyatt for the purposes of sculptural design has underestimated the cubic capacity even of that royal head.

Another respectable equestrian statue of a purely conventional type is the William III erected in 1808. Placed as it is among the beautiful plane-trees of St James's Square, this is certainly a pleasing object. Then there is Rodin's group of the Burghers of Calais. This of course makes a bid for something much more impressive and asks to be judged by higher standards than its decorative amenity. I must leave out for the present the discussion of how far it succeeds. All these are at least passable works, they are not artistically scandalous or disgraceful, but with the possible exception of the Rodin, they are hardly capable of arousing more than a feeling of mild approbation. As far as I know, there is only one outdoor statue in London that can lay claim to real distinction or that can give to those who love the expression of an idea in plastic form a genuine emotion.

The situation and aspect of this statue are so comically incongruous and unexpected, it has so much the air of a meteoric intru-

sion from other worlds, that a mythical explanation has to be found for its appearance. It all began, it is said, with one of the many occasions when "the Lord waxed exceeding wroth with his people, the people of London." But it so happened that being also "exceeding wroth" with a number of other people in different parts of the world, it did not suit his purposes to hurt them in their most sensitive spot by a financial crisis. He therefore considered in what way he could punish them most severely and continuously without interfering with the general course of events, and in the end he condemned them to possess and expose perpetually to the public gaze one work of genuine sculptural design. The people of London were at first staggered by this verdict, but they are an ingenious and resourceful people and they had often played the game of hiding an object in a clearly visible situation and they knew that the best results were obtained when it was placed in so conspicuous a spot that everyone overlooked it. So they found a place in the very heart of Philistia where more Philistines would pass within a few feet of it every day than in any other position in the whole of London town and where it would yet remain completely unknown.

So far I think the Philistines were playing the game with as much fairness as success, but I regret to add that they cheated a little over the question of mounting the statue. They erected it on one of those granite drinking-fountains where you press a knob and a little water trickles into a tin mug. About sixty years ago benevolent people were very fond of erecting these objects. They apparently believed that it really was thirst that drove people into the Public House. So far all was quite correct. Where the cheating came in was in getting a certain J. Edmeson Archt. to design a canopy in elaborately convoluted cast-iron of quite surpassingly hideous form and decorated with very cast-iron patterns, and in making the said canopy fit so closely over the head of the statue as to obscure it considerably, not to mention the tiresome interruptions to the view which the supporting columns interpose.

So there, on a triangle of pavement behind the Royal Exchange and a few feet from Threadneedle Street, inside its cast-iron cage and on top of the red polished granite fountain where no stock-broker ever drinks, sits London's one really good, I might almost say first-rate, statue.

An inscription runs as follows on a granite slab below it:—

"Erected 1878 at the expense of John Whittaker Ellis, Alderman, William Hartridge, Esq., Deputy, supplemented by a vote in Wardmote, also by donations from the Drapers' Company and the Merchant Taylors' Company."

I do not know whether Mr Ellis, Mr Hartridge, or Wardmote dictated the subject to the sculptor, but it was one that any sculptor might justly accept and it was peculiarly adapted to bring out all the qualities of Dalou's genius. For the figure of Maternity suckling a baby and holding an older child to her knee with a protecting gesture is signed Dalou 1879.

Here at least we are in the presence of genuine sculpture. There is nothing the least curious or interesting or decorative or in any way striking about it. The treatment is as traditional as the subject. This is just a mother like hundreds and thousands of mothers. There is no marked poetic or dramatic idea to help us out. We can get no pleasure here from anything but the special quality of sculpture, the harmonious counterplay of a complex system of planes and movements. It is only when, as here, the sculptor has himself felt intensely the continuity of the movement throughout every part, that he can communicate this special effect to our imagination. It is just because this group of three figures with all their complicated and corresponding movements depends entirely for its effect on realizing continuity, that the actual setting of the statue is so unfortunate. In trying to apprehend the inevitable relation of the woman's back to the movement of the arms, we are continually disturbed both by the excessive shadow in which the upper part is lost, and by the columns which cut across the forms. But with a little patience the rhythmic scheme becomes evident and we can feel the specific exhilaration which this clear sense of a vital order permeating a complex of volumes and planes arouses.

There is of course a further quality in sculpture which it is difficult to explain or analyse, namely that of surface quality. The question to be solved is, if we consider a bronze statue: how far the surface should suggest the sudden and complete resistance to touch of actual bronze, and how far it should suggest the quality

of flesh or drapery. The power to imitate in bronze a totally different substance is one of the stock marvels of sculpture to the unsophisticated. The imitation almost to the point of illusion of flesh, lace, velvet, or hair produce in the mind of the barbarian of modern civilization a vivid shock of wondering admiration, but this can hardly be counted an aesthetic quality.

From the aesthetic point of view, the determining factor must rather be some intimate correspondence between the larger rhythmic movements and the minute changes of direction which are due to the "handling" of the material, and which arouse in the mind the idea of some particular kind of surface. With certain hieratic and rigid movements we might almost require to be reminded of the unyielding resistance of the actual metal, with other rhythmic systems such a surface might arrest the movement too sharply. When, as in most renaissance bronzes—as for instance in the James II already mentioned—the decorative aspect of the material is exploited, we also need the sharpness of edge and the flatness of facets to which bronze specially lends itself; but in general we may say that for the richer and more complex rhythmic ideas, a rigid unbroken surface tends to be too schematic and abstract. A certain suggestion of play in the surface is almost as necessary as the "nervous" line in a drawing. But the exact degree of this play or "atmosphere" of the surface must depend on the general rhythmic feeling and the type of curvature of the modelling.

Dalou's treatment of surface is evidently deliberate and consistent. He chooses for his drapery a thick soft material which takes full rounded folds, and this is in accord with his feeling for flesh. Here, too, full rounded forms predominate, but they are never flaccid or inflated. One may perhaps compare his treatment to that of della Quercia among the Italians of the renaissance, but he is a della Quercia become aware of what the eighteenth century contributed—its variety of surface quality, its more conscious and nervous sensuality. But that is all that Dalou has borrowed, there is no eighteenth-century *mièvrerie* in this; it has the frankness and candour of an earlier art with that subtlety superadded.

More and more as time goes on Dalou begins to stand out from the ruck of nineteenth-century sculpture. How poor beside his generous and ample manner do the brilliant, stylized, photographic

effect
styli
D
and
publ
bacc
Mat
is in
iron
migh

I
tha
of
lig
wh
Pa

effects of Carpeaux show. How genuine he is beside the conscious stylistic borrowings of Alfred Stevens.

Dalou was an exile in London during and after the war of 1870 and it is to that fact that we owe this one really moving piece of public sculpture. He left here, too, the admirable tondo of a bacchanal scene in the Victoria and Albert Museum. But the Maternity of the City of London is a more impressive work. It is indeed one of the best of his that I know. Perhaps one day the iron tabernacle which disfigures and conceals our one masterpiece might be removed by a vote in wardmote.

I had hoped to have supplied photographs for this article, but it appears that no photographer has yet thought it worth while to place photographs of our statues on the market. This is disappointing, but throws a curious light on the psychology of the Londoner. There is one statue, however, of which photographs abound; it is a nauseating horror representing Peter Pan.

THREE POEMS

BY LEON SERABIAN HERALD

THE BEGGAR

His hand is lean.
He stretches his shaky hand
from an unseen place,
nor does he see the face
of his alms-giver,
nor what he has been offered.
He could have sat in a corner
where a short arm would do
for the alms coming from a short distance,
but a street is too narrow a place
for a master beggar;
so he sits in a vast place
vastness obscured.
In his slender and shaky hand
blood-beats assume sound,
his hand is light as shadow
because of the light burden
of words spent in the long distance,
bartered with refusal.

A DANCER

A shining marine animal
trapped in the transparence
of its blue sea gown—
your body!

Your arms—
phosphorescent gills
bridling the waves—
waves faithful as Arabian horses!

Naught but a foam
clinging to your body,
already become part of it—
your face!

Two enraged tides
to the shore—your thighs
tending to the shore
to be dissolved upon the sand!

My sea-dwelling soul
following, following, following,
falling, twisting, rising, following
your shadow!

BALLAD

My rich uncle in Egypt,
wishing to have a son
to whom to give an education,
called upon my father,
who supplied him with the worst
of all he had, and I shall not return;
because the son already knew
more than the father.

From Cairo I went home to visit,
without letting them know of my journey;
but my mother must have heard
that I was coming
(it is possible to hear unuttered things)
and thinking that she was too good
for me to see again,
died, and was buried
almost as I was entering the house.
And I was told by the sententious villagers
that it was my iron absence
that had hammered her to death.

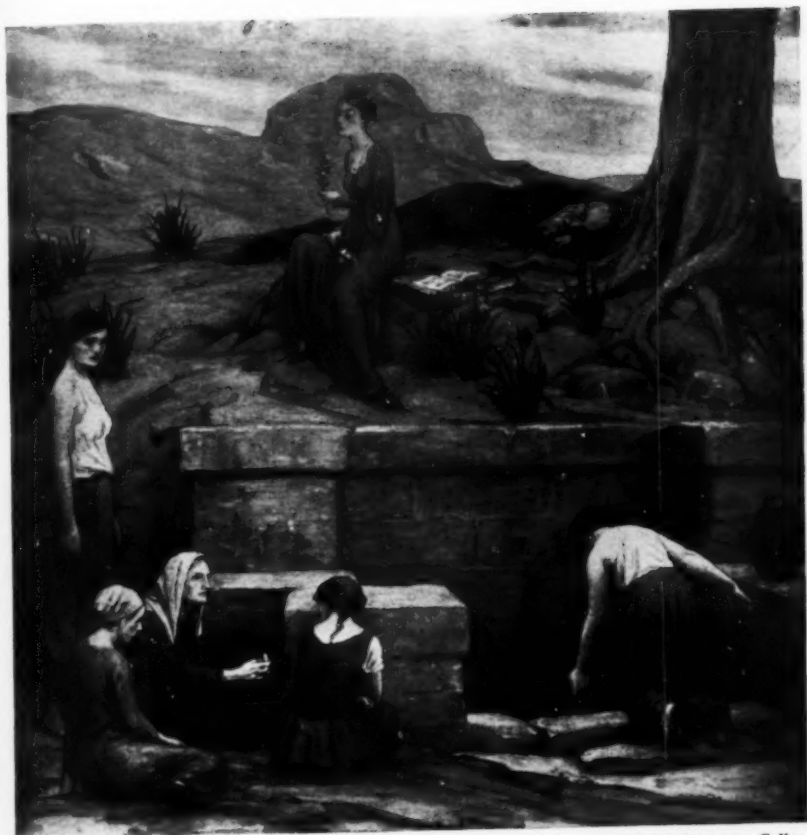
THREE POEMS

My eldest brother who was in America,
went home and shot my father.
He must somehow have heard
that there would be much killing;
something must have told him
that our father was too good
to be killed by another hand.

In America I am the baby
of the pleasure-loving family.
They all go out, forgetting me.
Then I begin to cry;
I fall out of my crib and bruise my soul.
That's best; no one will notice it.

When I had grown to manhood
I loved a college girl,
whose name as you would know, was Mary.
One night she said she loved me
and I took her to the house of a rich friend,
not knowing that she never before that,
had seen a mansion.
My twenty-one-year-old sweetheart, dazzled,
fell in love with my fifty-seven-year-old
Casanova friend.
My Casanova friend!
Disliking watchman's duty,
I resigned from my position
although I still could hold it;
they have told me
I may have it if I wish.

And now I am a person in retirement,
with life's riches in my hands—
about my neck,
my father's gift of long ago,
a rosary.



Courtesy of the Montross Gallery

THE WELL OF MERLIN. BY BRYSON BURROUGHS

A
pal
He
a fi
pla
upr
of
liqu
Blu
S
am
Yet
laug
has
twe
her
she
whi
him
mot
bre
his
had
stra
fall
not
and
wile
wer
pow
buc
A

SOUTHWEST

BY MABEL DODGE LUHAN

AS Silverbird opened his eyes, the morning star moved past his open door. It moved slowly—a drop of white fire in the pale green sky, and the air from the canyon was an icy breath. He stretched himself, tied his blanket around his loins, and made a fire of cedar branches in the little horseshoe-shaped corner fireplace. After he had set the old black coffee-pot between the small upright sticks of wood, he walked a few yards down to the edge of the creek, to wash and drink from the water that sparkled like liquid ice as it rushed down the mountain from the springs around Blue Lake, hastening southward to the Gulf of Mexico.

Silverbird was tall and lean. There was perpetually a look of amusement on his face as though he were laughing at something. Yet to his friends in the pueblo, he did not seem to have much to laugh at, for he was all alone in his house. Nearly every Indian has a mother or a wife, but his mother had died when he was twelve years old—when he had been for a long time apart from her at the “time of learning,” and he had nobody. Every day she would come with his corn-bread to the entrance of the room which he shared with the two other boys who were passing with him the year of initiation before entering the tribe. As their mothers did, she brought him his corn-meal mush or loaf of corn-bread; but after a few weeks, she did not come, and in her place, his old aunt brought him his food. When the men in the Kiva had told him that his mother was dead, he had taken it very strangely; he had not said a word, but that look of laughter had fallen upon his face and he had carried it ever after. He had not married, nor had the old men, vigilant in conserving the tribe and in convicting youth of indiscretion, caught him in any of those wild, careless pranks which are usual with young men. Silverbird went his path in silence with a smile upon his face. He worked his powers, the Indians said—worked his powers as they worked their buckskin hides, and the medicine-men worked their medicines.

At dawn that morning at the creek, he had met a couple of his

friends. These two, Eagle Star and Stonepath, were going up the mountain that day—one for a load of wood, the other to hunt grouse. Simultaneously they dashed the cold water of the creek to their faces and with both hands wet, smoothed down their hair. Each, as he knelt on the bank and tossed a stream of water to his mouth by a succession of swift movements, made it seem to rise to him in a little column.

"What you up so early for, friend?" asked Eagle Star as they rose and together faced the east in which the pale green of the sky was deepening to a warmer colour.

"Oh, I'm going to Prado. Our *compadre*, Josesito, is marrying off his girl to-day. They will need someone to work maybe, and I will chop wood for them to keep the fires burning in the oven and the stove. There will be *mucho* baking in that house before night-time."

"Hey! Cakes and pies and bread!" exclaimed Stonepath. "Some Indians are lucky."

"Well, friend, when you come back to-night with those birds, come to my house and we will eat together," replied Silverbird, the habitual smile lighting his thin face.

"And I will come too," said Eagle Star, adding, with a sly glint in his eye, "Maybe I will find something to-day besides my wood."

"*Bueno*, friends. We will wait for each other. Whoever comes first, from east, north, or west, will watch for the others from the roof top. Let us be off. Good hunting, brothers."

Returning to his house, Silverbird drank a bowl of the coffee which bubbled on the embers. It had been made from old grounds, but like all Indians he was used to the thin flavour and drank with enjoyment. He set the pot to one side, cherishing the grains for one more drenching, rolled his bed of skins into a packet which he placed against the wall, flung his blanket over his head, locked the door, and started to Prado by a short cut through the fields.

Long white reefs of cloud tinged with pink, lay across the tops of the mountains in a sky which had become translucent coral. Groups of horses and a drove of small cows grazed here and there. The fields stretched out green and suave like so many dark woolen blankets as Silverbird moved quickly along, his inscrutable smile directed upon Prado.

When he had come to the village, he heard a great barking of dogs and saw smoke rising from the two chimneys of Josesito's house and from the adobe oven by the kitchen door. He looked in, and oh, what bustle! What a lot was going on! The women were preparing food for the wedding feast. The bride's mother was rolling out piecrust, her aunt was kneading dough for bread, and the bride herself—her face powdered with flour to protect it from the sun—was about to draw the ashes from the adobe oven in which fire had been kept for an hour to heat it through.

"Hello, friends," said Silverbird to the women, who knew him well. Although antipathy may exist between Indians and Mexicans, as between Indians and white people, there are always exceptions to the general antagonism, and each Mexican family has its own friends among the Indians. As young girls, Silverbird's mother and Josesito's wife had swapped chickens for beadwork and beans for pottery. He was an old friend and his occasional visits were taken for granted. Josesito, himself, came strolling from behind the house and held out his hand with a singularly sweet smile. He was a good man; it was as though he had honey in his veins, so good and kind and easy was he.

"*Bueno, amigo*," he purred. "We have much going on in our house. This afternoon, Domingo Martines comes from Secco to marry my Rosita. All our friends will be here. I have just killed a sheep; come, you, and help me clean him." And the two men disappeared. They worked all morning, prepared the meat, chopped wood to replenish the stoves, and then tidied up the old shed near the corral—a prodigious undertaking, this. Only a wedding or a funeral can start things in an easy-going land. The women meanwhile cooked and struggled to put the house in order; they boiled and roasted meat, they made cakes, and swept—breaking every dead leaf from the geraniums in the south windows.

The day grew hot. The wild plum hedges between the fields were white with blossoms which made the air sweet, for it was May, and there was snow on the tops of the mountains. And yet the sun steadily, almost overbearingly beat down, as if gazing consciously at what went on that day.

The shelves in the kitchen were filled with pies and cakes. Great loaves of bread covered with white cloths stood on the recently scrubbed kitchen table. An immense black pot filled with mutton,

simmered on the stove beside another filled with red chiles. In the oven, the sheep's ribs were roasting.

By three o'clock, the company had begun to arrive. After lying like dead all forenoon, the dogs came suddenly to life and barked frantically, their front legs braced, their ears laid back, tails level. Josesito, wearing a white shirt and a vest with a black satin back, greeted each wagon-load of friends; and Silverbird, who was motioned to help him, turned the horses into the corral as Josesito led the guests into the house. The front room—the bedroom—was soon full of people. In their black fringed shawls, they stood about, or sat on the enormous white iron bed with its two ruffled pillow-cases and white cover—both pillow-cases and coverlet embroidered with thin red cotton thread, in a design of birds and flowers. The women, black figures against the whitewashed walls, resembled the small painted Santos that hung behind them. Their faces all expressed a kind of patient acquiescence. Some were pale, some sombre, others sweet and smiling.

Several young girls giggled in a corner. They wore ready-made muslin dresses, pink or blue; and big straw hats over their black eyes, covered with bunches of fast fading ribbon or with wild flowers—wild indeed. Hands in pockets, their sombreros tipped over their eyes—the men loitered about outside the house, smoking cigarettes, smiling uncertainly toward the front room where the women were.

Josesito was now busier than ever, hauling water from the well for his thirsty friends, exchanging a few words with them, seeing that the horses were cared for.

Silverbird moved to and fro quietly helpful, smiling, watching everything. When a horse kicked at its unfamiliar neighbour, Silverbird was off first to separate them. As each wagon came up, he was at Josesito's elbow to assist in unharnessing and leading the animals to the corral. He said little.

The bridegroom was a good-looking boy with red cheeks, and bright hair made flat with lard. He strove to appear at ease, but his black eyebrows twitched, his mouth was a tight line, and he could hardly wait for this day of festivity to be over—the marriage service, the feast, the dance. After that, he could withdraw Rosita from the gathering and drive her in his buggy to his mother's house ten miles away. His mother and father had come and would go back, in a wagon.

A fat, severe woman, Rosita's mother was none too glad to lose her daughter, who was helpful to her, baking, weaving blankets, and all that. She knew Rosita was lucky to get Domingo; just the same it was going to be hard. Between vivacious greetings, artificial smiles and cackles, she threw a hard look at poor Domingo—a figure of strong light and shade in the blazing sun as he nonchalantly strolled past the door in his effort to catch a glimpse of Rosita who was sitting on a carved bench inside, with two girls. She was a shrew and everybody knew it—"La Chiquita." Josesito had begun to call her that twenty years ago when she had looked like Rosita.

"She'll be a grand mother-in-law," whispered one of Domingo's friends, blowing smoke rings in the direction of the large, severe dame as her glance fell on them from the dim room.

"Oh, shut up," growled Domingo. Didn't he know it? He walked over to his father to get the sense of reassurance. His father, Enrico Martines, was a tiny man with a most fiery disposition. No one had a worse temper than he when he was put out. Domingo had none of this fighting spirit; he had only a strong heart for work and a strong fear of women—although he was drawn to them too. He felt, half consciously, that his father would be on his side when they had become all one family, together, linked by the priest. The old man smiled quizzically and sniffed in the direction of the front room. Instinctive as an animal, he knew the fears that were coursing through his son.

"Come, friend," said Josesito, laying his hand on Silverbird's arm. "It is all over; now we will eat together." They stood by the kitchen door, drying their hands on a cloth. The sun had crossed the sky and was now in the west. The wedding had taken place and the guests were together again for the great moment of the day—the feast of chile con carne, of bread, meat, cakes, and coffee. Sweat stood in beads on Josesito's brow, but Silverbird was calm. He seemed to feel none of the fatigue, the anger, the fear, which moved the others. There was merely that look of amazement, that lurking humour in his eyes.

La Chiquita saw them. For the first time that day, Silverbird appeared to stand out from his surroundings as someone, as something, separate. She was tired. She felt like giving that Domingo a box on the ears and telling him to clear out, but she must remain polite and smiling. But Silverbird—that Indian—was not a part

of this game she had to play—no part of this life at all. She need not smile at him if she did not feel like smiling. She need not be polite to Silverbird. As she moved toward the two friends who stood wiping their hands on the same cloth, she was a fine figure of a woman in a most exceedingly bad temper.

"Now what you doing 'round here, Silverbird?" she asked in a low, harsh voice. "I thought you gone home long ago. We got lots of people here to-day, so you better go home. No time to feed you—no place!"

Josesito looked up quickly at the sound of her voice, which was pitched to wound, to deliver a blow. It eased her to speak so—one could see it as she stood there. Silverbird looked at her and smiled. There was no flicker of any feeling other than amusement in his face—of surprise or sorriiness or anger—as he said, "All right, *señora*. I go now. . . . *Adios, amigos*," he added and turned at once toward the pueblo.

"That's pretty mean," said Josesito. He spat.

"I can't help it," replied La Chiquita, turning to feed her guests.

Silverbird walked home across the pasture lands, moving quickly over the dark cropped grass—behind him the sun which had that morning risen behind him. He walked as lightly on the firm yet spongy turf, he wore as satisfied, as intent an expression as he had worn at sunrise. Stonepath was a tiny speck, identified by his green and white blanket, sitting high on the housetop as Silverbird approached. He had noted the grey liltng figure as it crossed the fields and simultaneously each waved to the other. The sun had set; a rose light had tinged the tip of the great mountain and faded. Two figures now watched Silverbird. Stonepath and Eagle Star, who had wrapped themselves from head to foot in white sheets, sat side by side, motionless, waiting. Only their eyes showed—two dark triangles in two pillars of salt as the cool night air poured down upon them from the canyon. They met him at his door and all three entered. With a careless gesture that masked his pride, one of them threw half a dozen birds on the floor; the other lowered a great lump of honey from beneath his white sheet. Only Silverbird brought nothing—nothing but a smile. They quickly made a fire as Indians do in the early morning or evening: "for company—for more life," they say. Silverbird's voice then

rose in narrative—musical, gentle, restrained, and sensitive. Looking into the fire—not listening with their eyes—his friends absorbed the sound of his voice as they absorbed the heat. When he had ended, they made gentle sounds of affirmation, of agreement. They showed no emotion, no excitement; but rather, a kind of patient resignation; not the resignation of the Mexican women, but an unyielding, indomitable firmness. They accepted an unending struggle as if they knew they could not win.

Hanging the birds on a nail, and placing the honey on the edge of the chimney, they glided from the house, Silverbird leading the way, back in the direction from which he had just come—to Prado. Once out of sight of the pueblo, they untied their long hair and flung it loose; it was like dark water shimmering in the dusk, as arm in arm they began to dance in a curious jog-trot, towards Prado, chanting in a low sing-song, raising their knees, swinging along in a kind of inverted goose-step. Their eyes were fixed. They were one moving shadow—passing backward under the stars to Prado where the wedding feast was in progress.

Never a break in the movement or in the song as back, back, they danced, their hair swinging at their waists like dark waterfalls. No stumbling in the short grass, never a collision with a tree or shrub. As with clairvoyant single intention they came at last to Prado, the barking of dogs and the sound of fiddles was heard on the quiet air. Then unaccountably, the barking stopped. The three-fold dancing figure backed into the patch of light from the open door. There was for an instant a discordant clash. The squeaking of fiddle-strings, excited voices, and laughter were met by an invincible harmony. The mild, united song of the Indians had overpowered the disjointed utterance that had poured from the big room, and there was silence.

Preceding his companions, Silverbird entered the house. What a sight! The wedding-guests had sunk to the floor. With eyes closed, some sat against the wall, some against the bed; the fiddler lay with his head pillowed on his violin. Silverbird had worked his powers.

"Now *we* eat," said Silverbird, gently leading his friends between the wedding-guests who strewed the floor. Out to the kitchen went the three, where they found the loaves of bread, pies, chiles, and cold mutton. In silence, seated on the floor, they ate

in dignity, and drank great bowls of coffee. Then when they had returned to the front room, Silverbird said, as they gazed upon the helpless bridal party:

"The *señora* was cross to me for no cause. I think now we give a good reason to be mad."

Stooping, they drew the guests into a pattern, arranging them by pairs. With lips parted and a timid frown upon his face, Domingo lay beside his mother-in-law, La Chiquita, who was like a fat monk in her shawl. The bride was by her father-in-law, her brown hands folded on her white sash, a vacant look upon her face. That tiny man, even in his slumbers, wore a prodigiously fierce look. In couples, like enemies made friends by death, the company lay sleeping.

Silverbird went to the door, and facing the east, seemed to speak a few words to the sky.

"Come, friends," he said to Eagle Star and Stonepath, "the sun will wake them. I have told him to do it. Now we go and leave them to be cross with each other, not with Silverbird."





NIEDERBAYER. BY ALFRED KUBIN

T

erec
brin
and
was
of l
gro
The
like
day
twi
ther
they
and
of l
pla
opp
sen
two
sha
the
the
bro
of
sha
upv

I
self
eve
fel

¹ P

GRECO'S PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF¹

BY PAUL ROSENFELD

THE movement of the ears unlocks his life to you, letting the world slip with a precipitous gesture of falling shoulders, erecting the seeing head solitary as a lighthouse in the night. It brings the vehement thrust of iron against which he held his quiet and his equilibrium where no hand might touch it. All in this life was not gentleness of inclination nor keen penetration of the truth of human existence through walls of steel and stone, nor spiritual growth not yet complete in him but mounting toward a point! The rose thorns of the flesh were there. Forces within the man like those out in the world pressed upon his strength and filled his days with conflict. Driven by their quality of warm colour, the twin pink devils of ears spike the high-domed sallow skull between them, accenting the resistance, the counterpressure of the long mass they pin. Other shapes upon the canvas continue the sharp motion and shake with a feeling of keen nervous tension. Pointed shapes of livid light, elongated, extended in lozenge-like, pyramidal forms play against each other. The slender head resembles two pyramids opposed base to base. The nose is a tiny pyramid, broad and sensual at the base and tapered upward to a delicate apex. The two pieces of the ruff oppose two small lozenges twisted in convex shape, and each shoulder with its arm constitutes a pyramid. In their sum they form an organization itself a tall spike, pent in by the vise of ominous background pressed heavily upon it, and unbroken in its upward and counter thrust. We recognize the creator of the strong art of El Greco, the art of fire and grace and pain shaken by tension, by anxiety and excitement, and streaming upward with the aspiration of the great Gothic churches.

He wished to point the reference, to make us conscious of himself. Ego-expression could have had little interest for him, whose every work was self-portraiture, a psychic form, an individual state felt in terms of the whole of life, a person, a struggle, a cry re-

¹ Recently acquired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

united with the all. Altar-pieces, allegories, the landscape, and the portraits, each one of them was self-expressive. The very rhythm of the formal autoportrait exists in numerous pieces of his work. The number of the canvases not built by him upon its plastic principle is small. Two irresistible forces pin in position the nobly, wistfully consenting figure of the kneeling Christ in the Gethsemanes in London and in Paris. . . . Two greenish spikes thrust from below upon the curving mass of rose that forms the Christ. The immovable rock-like pyramidal mass which surrounds him is hemmed in by two areas, the one of oppressive black spotted with ghastly white which holds the approaching soldiers, the other of pearl, fine yellow, and light grey, in which the chalice-bearing angel kneels; the while itself towers upward to perfection. In the miraculous Pentecost in the Prado, the central form, the Virgin, is similarly borne in upon by the excited flanking masses of jewelled light and colour, and given ecstatic upward and outward motion. In relatively few paintings of the maturer Greco is the rhythm gentle, the constriction light and tender, the shape pressed in upon quiet in its counterthrust.

He had—as clearly few painters have possessed it—the power of abstraction and universalization, of automatically feeling life in subjective terms. Feelings about human life and destiny in Greco, states of oppression, of deathwardness, of rapture and exaltation, were experienced as poignant shapes and exciting rhythms born of his body's and the general human body's half-conscious knowledge of itself. In Schopenhauer's genial phrase, he "objectified the idea of the human form." No painting is more penetratingly corporeal, more "sexual," even. One moves through tides of flesh, through tissue, membrane, and ligament, before these mighty canvases. No painting is more divinely spiritual. The flesh is touched with a gracious and exalted feeling of life. It presents the utmost of materiality penetrated by the fire of the ghost and made a new element embracing both. El Greco was the healthy human being in a sick world. His age like ours was rotten with sex, permeated by fear, mysticism, cruelty, flagellation, and other symptoms of the natural life repressed, perverted, and turned hideous. Yet amid the denial of Toledo and of Spain, the Greek's desires must have gone directly toward their object. The body gave him a point of contact with the vasty regions of human

experience. In recognizing its grand rôle, in allowing its centrality in life, perhaps slightly exaggerating its function because the others so stubbornly refused to see, he liberated and sublimated his spirit. The limbs, breasts, and flanks became units of a neutral universal medium; shapes and integers of a material which, since Greco was a painter and a visualist, was the material of light. He actually created in terms of light. In the history of art, in the very Venetian painting from which he derived, light had never played as superior, as independent a rôle as that he assigned to it. He worked entirely in the terms of his medium. In Titian,¹ light remains a secondary factor, constrained to illuminate the chief figures of the composition and to subordinate the rest. In Tintoretto, light is *en route* toward the condition of form. It takes perspective up into itself and creates tridimensionality. But in El Greco, light is form. His shapes are penetrated completely by it. The light takes them up into itself and reissues them as light. The ripier, greater Greco models in a rich and tawny, vibrant and solemn colour as others model in clay, running the fluid immaterial masses through his crook'd fingers and rigid palms. Are these clouds, one asks, or solid shapes with all the rooted strength of mountains? Centuries after, a French painter with an imagination, a feeling for the identity of his material related in all its peasant-like heaviness to Greco's wirier, more nervous and aristocratic one, saw in the Cretan's painting a corroboration of his own idea, made careful copies of certain figures, and was pressed toward the revolutionary painting we associate with the name Cézanne.

The shapes themselves in the great votive pictures, the forms of clouds and people, rocks and cloths and trees, were closely related to Greco as though he had found them in himself in painting his own image. We cannot be positive, even in the face of his self-portrait, that elongated forms composed his proper person, although the possibility suggested by Maurice Barrès, that Greco was a Murano returned to his ancestral home, renders the assumption even less hazardous. But we know he sought them out, and was satisfied and made to increase in life through contact with them. Before coming to Spain and Toledo the painter must have had an inward relation to, a secret preparation for, the harsh

¹ See Hugo Kehrer: *Die Kunst des Greco*.

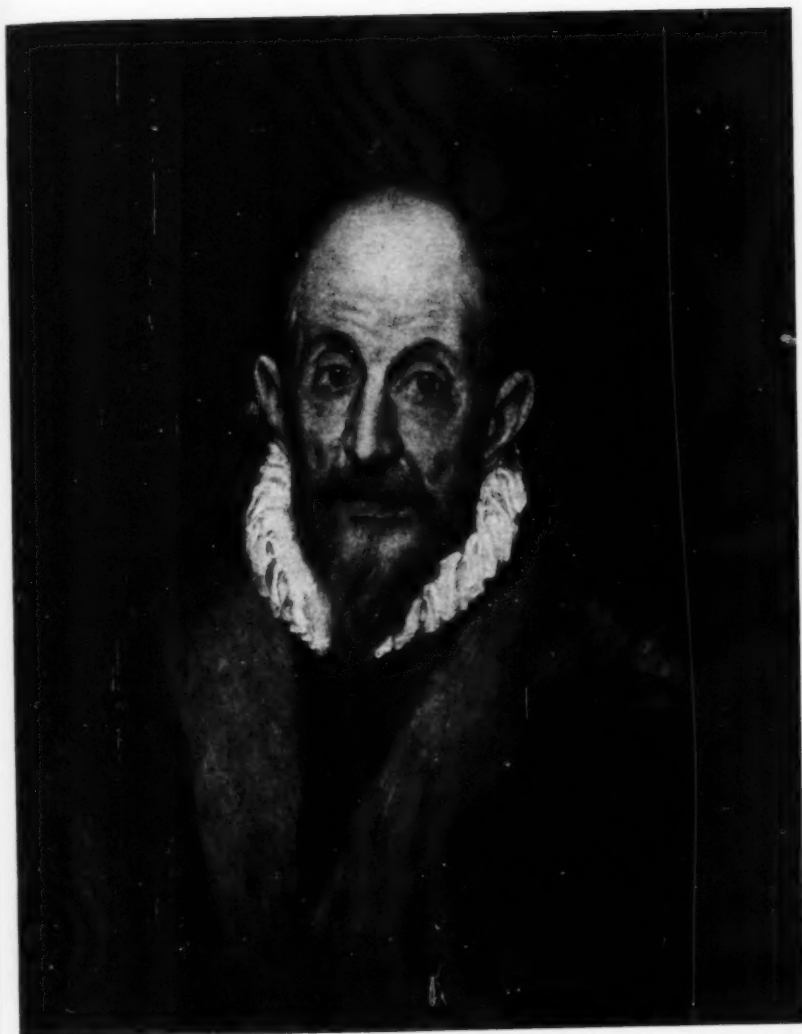
soil and sinister clouds, the tragic people, the flaming sunlight and moonlight, and the spirit of life created by them. Although he was well received in Italy and lodged in a cardinal's palace in Rome, the environment at the very pitch of the puritanic counter-reformation did not release him. A principle in Greco must have responded to austerity of shape. For his steepness of sense, passionateness and sombreness of temperament, and aggressiveness of attitude, Italy even under Spanish dominion was too easy and voluptuous. That ardour, that seriousness and sternness required a more strenuous and exacting environment. So he came to and remained lifelong in stony Toledo, where travellers even to-day see riding their donkeys up the granite lanes and digging the tufa of the surrounding plain, men, women, and children with attenuated carven skulls and long spare and swollen limbs which might have been assembled from the canvases of the painter; and where upon the horizon the clouds form "gloomy metallic lakes." Possibly Philip II's passion for Venetian art suggested a generous patron. But Philip's heavy gaze preferred the opulencies of Titian. Grandees, churches, and convents gave Greco orders occasionally; but when he died his property consisted of an hundred and fifteen of his paintings for which there were no purchasers. Yet from that stone and that dramatic sky he never went again. Between the alien, austere, and yet strangely kindred outer world and the dark and ardent inner life of the painter there came to exist a body of broad, deep, and accurate relationships. The things before the man grew upon him in the fullness of their identities. He had arrived in Toledo filled with memories of the paintings of his master Tintoretto and of Michael Angelo; but his art rapidly individualized under the effect of an ever-growing freedom, elegance, and poignancy in the usage of living shapes synthesized by his inner states from Spanish life. These motives, forms, movements, colourations he selected ever more daringly and appreciatively, applying them in all their relative exaggeration and abnormality. They came to embody more and more copiously the values of life itself, and to accent its pathos and immedicable anguish, its inexplicable wonder and grace. Degraded and brutal expressions forced themselves upon him only early in his stay, and in scattered instances. As he grew into middle life they disappeared entirely in the stream of the admirable ones filled with

suffering and ecstasy, exquisitely declarative of the beauty, pain, and unfathomable depth of the heart. Perhaps no painter has gotten more poignant suggestions from the life of hands. Greco appears to have seen in their shapes and poses the gamut of human existence, tenderness, weariness, hesitation, tragic consent, serviceableness, devotion, and the cry of intolerable joy. He and the things before him had become as one.

It was the deep, the ultimate expression of Greco's own relationship to life which in the form of rhythm finally drove to geometrical sharpness and combined the shapes so simply presented to us in the self-portrait, so elaborately in the great votive canvases. That rhythm, adjusted to the requirements of space and subject, is usually tense and nervous, passionate and ecstatic, built of violent pressures and stubborn resistances of colour and shape, rapid writhing light, vehement earthward strokes, noblest elongations, and spiritual attenuations. The elongations of the flecks, opening, swelling sharply out and tapering again; the rapid modulations of colour from deepest black through lustrous red and green, orange and yellow, to sharpest white, then back again from white through lustrous colour to black, create violent ecstatic motion over the canvases. There is a continuous nervous snapping of radiance, sudden flashes, and equally sudden dwindlings. In picture upon picture the integers appear to reel in disequilibrium, thrusting violently outward in contrary directions, threatening to fall entirely asunder. The rhythm of the glorious Pentecost shoots upward to a corner of the canvas, falls precipitously downward to the lower foreground, to mount again in a series of contractions and expansions toward the tongues of fire and the unearthly yellow dome. The great pieces are very conflagrations of racing, twitching, plunging, bursting ruby, topaz, and chrysoprase. That was the time, filled with enthusiasm, excitement, and religious fervour, anxiety, cruelty, and death; bestial and delicate at once; sumptuous in its appointments and bloody in its passions; the time of the ferocious soldier, the fanatical inquisitor, the *précieux*, and the gracious saint; of Alva and Góngora, Cervantes, Guevara, and Theresa of Avila. It was a time curiously like our own; yet the art of El Greco possesses an element common neither to our time nor to the one in which he lived. In his pictures, the turmoil and disequilibrium are caught and held in marvellous balance. There

is triumphant final equipoise in all of Greco. There is no weight of violently projected form that is not counterweighed. In all its stress, torture, and extremity, life circles in great, satisfying, never-ending motion. The two great movements of penetration and hollowing, the masculine and feminine of movement, in all the intensity of their war equalize one another. Light and dark, universal and particular, the stern and the tender, the bitter and the divine, are held in a form during those sovereign moments, and felt as single. Life moves upward to fulfilment. That too may have been the time. More likely, it was the man Theotocopuli. That was what he had found in life, and what made him live. There was in him the strange power, sanity, and balance which makes all things "work together for good." Overwhelming external pressure, bitter conflict of man and of environment, of light and darkness, of life and death, are the conditions of its existence. It obligates struggle and tragedy and pain. It requires an ideal opponent, a stern challenge, a hopeless fight. Because of it El Greco sought out the fire where it was hottest and stubbornly held steadfast amid the flames. Even at the cost of life, life grew intense and fine and gracious so. Then perhaps one day in gazing into a mirror he perceived in his own features and forms the action of the whole, the fearful ravages, and the resultant work; the enemies without himself and in the flesh driving him to drop the world, and lift the seeing head, and grow in inner strength. And taking up his material he made a play of two powers: the one pressing downward as a vise, the other a sharp slender pyramid thrusting upward to perfection, and termed it the Portrait of Himself.

ght
all
ng,
ion
all
rk,
and
and
may
uli.
ive.
ich
ing
of
its
re-
ght.
and
life,
day
and
re-
ving
nner
two
harp
the



Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

PORTRAIT. BY EL GRECO

S

wh

sw

pu

wi

the

sky

in

br

wa

eye

shi

sm

her

It

for

eve

cus

list

bir

he

ha

ing

thr

joy

MILKING TIME

BY LIAM O'FLAHERTY

SOFTLY, softly the milk flowed from the taut tapering teats into its own white upward heaving froth. It flowed in two white columns, shooting, crossing, and descending with a soft swirling sound through the billowing froth.

There is no soft cadence as soothing as its sound, no scent as pure as its warm smell, cow smell, blood smell, milk smell, mingling with the thousand soft smells of a summer evening.

The cow stood on the summit of a grassy knoll. Behind her there was a rock-strewn ridge, making a grey horizon against the sky. In front there was a vast expanse of falling land, falling in flat terraces to the distant sea. Close by, the land was green bright under the rays of the setting sun, but in the distance it was covered with white mist, as if it rolled, dust raising, to the sea.

The cow chewed her cud, looking through half-closed luminous eyes downward at the mist-covered falling land. Her red flanks shivered with content, the pleasure of being milked by a sweet-smelling crooning woman, the pressure of whose soft fingers against her teats was gentler than the pressure of a calf's gums.

And the woman milking the cow was in an ecstasy of happiness. It was her first time milking her husband's cow, her cow henceforth. They had been married on Thursday. It was now Sunday evening and they had come together to milk the cow, as was the custom among the people.

Her husband lay on the grass watching her as she milked, listening to her crooning voice and to the many voices of the birds; thinking.

"Isn't it wonderful how your little fingers can milk so quickly?" he said.

She turned her head and shook her towering mass of black hair proudly, smooth-combed winding tresses of black hair gleaming in the twilight, red lips smiling as they crooned, a full white throat swelling with soft words; crooning meaningless words of joy as she looked at him.

He looked at her happily and smiled, swallowing his breath. "Wasn't it lovely to-day, Kitty," he said, "coming from Mass?" She bowed her head dreamily.

"Everybody was looking at us as we came out of the chapel together. We are the tallest couple in the parish, and I heard many talking about us in whispers as we passed along the road between the men sitting on the stone walls. Were you shy?"

"I was. I put my shawl out over my head so they couldn't see my face. I thought I'd never get out of sight of the people."

"After all it's a great thing," he said.

"What's a great thing, Michael?"

His freckled face became serious. He looked away into the distance over the mist-covered falling land to where the dim horizon of the sea dwindled into a pale emptiness.

"How tall he is," she thought, "and although his arms are as hard as iron he touches me gently. . . . What's a great thing, Michael?" she said again.

"Well, it's hard to say what it is, but we are here together now and there is nothing else, is there?"

"How?"

"Before, on a Sunday evening, I always wanted to go off somewhere and maybe get drunk; but now I don't want to do anything at all, only just to lie here and watch you milking the cow."

She did not reply. She flushed slightly and bent her head against the cow's warm side, thinking of other Sundays when she sat among the village women on the green hill above the beach singing songs as they knitted. Then she used to dream of love and of some strange man, formless, unknown, who would take her gently in strong arms and kiss her.

But she just said, "Men are queer," and changing her hands she drew at the hind teats, wetting them first with the froth and pressing slowly until two fresh white streams flowed downwards.

The cow raised a hoof languidly and stamped, swinging her tail. Michael laughed.

"Maybe they are," he said.

There was silence.

"Michael."

"What?"

"Sure you won't be going off again on Sunday evenings to get drunk when you get tired of me?"

"I'll never get tired of you, Kitty."

"Ah, yes, it's very easy to say that now when we are only a few days married, but maybe—"

"No, Kitty, there's going to be no maybe with us. We'll have too much work to do to get tired of one another. It's only people who have nothing to do that get tired of one another."

"It will be lovely working together, Michael. I love pulling the potato stalks in autumn and then picking the potatoes off the ridge, and at dinner time we'll roast a few in the ground with a fire of stalks."

"The two of us."

"Yes."

"But we have all summer before that. There isn't much work in summer, only fishing. I'm going fishing to-morrow."

"Then you'll be away all day, and I'll be lonely with nobody in the house."

"You won't feel it until I come back again with a lot of fish. It would be grand to take you with me in the boat, but people would be laughing at us."

They became silent as she finished milking, drawing the dregs, the richest of the milk, carefully. It was like a ceremony, their first milking together, and both their minds were awed at the new strange knowledge that had come to their simple natures, something that belonged to them both, twining their souls, conscious of their present happiness, with a dim realization of the great struggle that was to come, struggling with the earth and with the sea for food. This dim realization tinged their happiness with a gentle sadness, without which happiness is always coarse and vulgar.

She finished milking. Michael rose and spilt half the milk into a bucket for the calf.

"You take it to him," he said, "so that he'll get used to you."

The cow lowed, lazily looking at them with great eyes. Then she walked with heavy hoofs to the fence beyond which her calf was waiting for his milk in a little field. Putting her head over the fence, she licked his upraised snout.

THE STAR

They pushed aside the cow's head and lowered the bucket to the calf. He dashed at it, sank his nozzle into the white froth, and began to drink greedily, his red curly back trembling with eagerness.

Kitty rubbed his forehead as he drank.

Then they walked home silently, hand in hand, in the twilight.

THE STAR

BY JOSEPH CAMPBELL

Thro' the roaring boughs of sin
Burns a solitary star.
It is of the cherubin,
It has all the joys that are;
Burning, thro' the roaring boughs,
On the horn of heaven's house.

Black the boughs against the air;
White the star, and cherub-fair.

Hooded owls make ceaseless moan
Thro' the sin-excited boughs.
On the golden finial-stone
Crowning heaven's purple house
Burns the star—remote, unstirred,
Steadfast—beacon of the Word.



CALIGARI. BY GASTON LACHAISE



BUST OF WOMAN. BY GASTON LACHAISE



WOMAN. BY GASTON LACHAISE

T

been
has
men
in h
by a
such
ton
forg
guin
imit
of s
have
tical
ham
was
evol
had
sea.
colo
into
that
tem
sift
but
vari
chol
tion

¹ R
T
pa

A MASTER IN WATER-COLOUR

BY THOMAS CRAVEN

THE truth about Bonington has at last been written. Since his death a hundred years ago, this remarkable painter has been the victim of collectors, forgers, and romancers, and his life has been converted into a golden legend. Brilliant in all departments of art, amazingly precocious, and cut off by a consumption in his youth after a career of mature achievement unapproached by any painter at the age of twenty-five, it is little wonder that such a man should have become fabulous. To the artists Bonington has always been a master, especially in water-colour; the forgers, profiting by the eagerness of collectors to pay a thousand guineas for a scrap of a drawing, have passed off innumerable imitations; and the romancers, taking it for granted that a painter of such dazzling parts must have been cast in the Byronic mould, have manufactured all sorts of appetizing myths out of practically no evidence. It is recorded, for instance, by Allan Cunningham, his first biographer, that Bonington, when three years old, was drawing with skill and ease, and that at the age of ten he evolved by the process of divination the appearance of things he had never seen—realistic studies of ships and the moods of the sea. Another writer makes him the hero of Bohemian Paris, and colours a rather prosaic liaison with a certain Mlle Rose, a model, into a romance of the same name; a third would have us believe that his days and nights in Venice were worthy of his wicked contemporary, Childe Harold. It has remained for a Frenchman¹ to sift the legendary nonsense and to present, not only the painter, but the man, who turns out to be a hard-working Britisher, invariably composed, more often than not phlegmatic and melancholy, and driven on to unexampled productivity by the premonitions of a fatal disease. M Dubuisson, artist as well as critic,

¹ Richard Parkes Bonington: *His Life and Work*. By A. Dubuisson. Translated with annotations by C. E. Hughes. Illustrated. 4to. 217 pages. The Bodley Head. 63s.

has told the story with fine sympathy and grace, and has concluded the account with a critical examination of Bonington's art, a study distinguished for historical understanding and aesthetic sense. He has also traced the destiny of the artist's works, an extraordinary piece of diligence, and has chosen the illustrations with scrupulous care.

At the age of fifteen Bonington was taken by his father to Paris, and with the exception of several excursions into the provinces and one into Italy, spent the rest of his short life in the French capital. From the very beginning he seemed to be conscious of his powers and to have them under perfect control; he hurried from triumph to triumph, swiftly making himself supreme in water-colour, mastering lithography as if by instinct, and at the time of his death proving himself in oils, not only in landscape, but in historical composition, a field in which his companion Delacroix was to attain the greatest eminence. Recognition came in his seventeenth year. Resenting the pedantic instruction of Gros, Bonington broke loose in an exhibition of water-colours which became the talk of Paris. He was famous at a single stroke; he sold every picture in the gallery, and before he was twenty the collectors were on his trail. In the epochal Salon of 1824, an event which struck at the very roots of Davidian tyranny and which was to affect the course of art throughout the next century, he was represented along with his fellow-countrymen, Lawrence, Constable, and Copley Fielding, and was awarded a gold medal. Bonington was then twenty-two years old, and the gallant Delacroix praised his genius in these words: "You are king of your domain, and Raphael could not do what you have done." And Corot, who at this date had never held a brush though Bonington's senior by six years, saw in the young man's work a vision of nature akin to his own, and determined thereupon to become a painter. Only a little of life was left to him and he made the most of it. He rushed off to Italy to study Veronese, and while at Venice, in less than a month, executed fifteen oils, as many water-colours, and a quantity of drawings, surely a prolific display for one reputed to have a taste for riotous living. Incessant activity aggravated his malady, and two years later he returned to his native land to die.

There is no need to speculate on what Bonington might have

done had his life been prolonged. He was a man marked by destiny, and being spared the long groping struggle of most painters, bequeathed the world an astonishing number of pictures—not experimental studies, but finished works. Unfortunately for the public most of these works are dispersed in private collections and very few have found their way into America. M Dubuisson unhesitatingly places him among the great artists of the nineteenth century, an opinion shared, I think, by the majority of discerning critics. The work of the man has stood the test of time, and the movement to which he gave the strongest initial impetus was of a more enduring nature than the recent upheavals emanating from Cézanne. Bonington was primarily a painter: the world to him was only so much material for the artist. Nothing else mattered; and as a consequence, his vision, penetrating and individual as it unquestionably was, never impelled him into the deeper human conflicts which were to claim Delacroix, Daumier, and Courbet. In water-colour, the medium of his most magnificent victories, his poetic strain falls somewhat in line with the English school of Old Crome, Cotman, Constable, and Turner, but his plastic statement is entirely his own. He may be said to have introduced the medium to the French, and seeking truth, freshness, and reality, as opposed to the sterile classicism of his age, went directly to nature. The same qualities characterize his oils: lightness of execution, a dazzling colour gamut of diffused gold and amber, faint underlaid blues, and flashes of red and green, and an unsurpassed command of tone, all combining, as Delacroix said, "to make his work seem like diamonds by which the eye is charmed and delighted independently of all subject and imitation." He was a romantic through and through: he made no attempt to acquire classic depth and solidity, nor did he build up his world, like Seurat, from the harmonious aggregate of many selected experiences. He seized upon nature, cast out forthwith all irrelevant shapes and objects, arranged his forms as if guided by the sense of inevitable placement, never crowding his figures or forcing a rhythm, and bound the conception together by a marvellous envelope of tone. His method of composing was exceedingly simple, and when employed by lesser hands exceedingly monotonous: an immense background of glowing sky, a stretch of sea with a few boats, or a strip of land with clusters of figures or

trees. But the convincing element of reality is there, and one feels that his pictures are actual transcripts, not of the world as the ordinary eye sees it, but of a serene golden world, perfectly poised and beautifully distributed, the world of a visionary who subdued his frenzies to an intelligible human scheme.

In the sweeping romantic revolt of the nineteenth century, Bonington was the bond of union between English and French art. He did not live to see the magnitude of the movement, nor was he indeed the greatest of the new school, but he was one of the leaders and gave to painting the authority of genius and the inspiration of new ideas. After him came Géricault, Delacroix, Corot, Daumier, Courbet, the Impressionists, and then Cézanne and the modernists. And now that modernism has wandered from human issues into the barren province of abstraction, it is not unreasonable to expect a return to historic subject-matter, or more happily, a new romanticism in the form of dramatic murals and vivid decoration.

OTHER MEN'S EYES

BY J. JEREMY-LEE

I HAVE some fish in my conservatory at Hapinstan. The sun shines on them through the glass roof as they swim hither and yon around the edge of the pool.

I have three black fish from the seas of China. They have sharp jaws, but beautiful tails like the leaves of the weeping willow that swish and glide through the water. They cast on the tiled floor of the pool, a deep black shadow.

I have also three red fish—three red fish as small as a lady's hand, and when the sun shines on them through the glass roof, it hurts one's eyes to look at them.

Four white fish I have—my beauties, my albinos. At night when it is dark in my conservatory, there are no fish in the pool but my white fish gleaming through the darkness.

And three of gold I have, with plates of gold armour in which they swim along the bottom of the pool as though they could not rise.

Old, very old, always the same, my fish are known throughout the land. Everyone who comes to Hapinstan comes to look at them, and all those who have seen them say that they are beautiful. All but one man who had just come from the South Seas—who gazed on my fish and said, "Pah! They are hideous! Those white ones—they shine like leprosy; and those red—they are red like the lips of a courtesan. The yellow are like the gold she takes, and the black—the black are as the lies she tells. Pah, they are hideous." He walked away and I never saw him again.

One day there came a little English girl of ten with her governess to see my fish. The little girl clapped her hands and cried, "Aren't they beauties! They sparkle like Mother's jewels—like rubies, onyx, and diamonds."

In November as I was basking in the sun beside my pool, an adventurer who had travelled the world over, came to see my fish. After gazing at them a long time, he turned to me and said,

"Your fish are truly cosmopolitan. The black are like the negroes in the Congo; the white, like the cliffs of dear old Dover; the yellow are like the golden corn of the West; and the red—are like the poppies of Cathay."

My fish are always the same; those who see them are never the same; and to all who see them they are different.

EARTH'S ADMONITION

BY GEORGE O'NEIL

The one whose body is of antler-bone,
With rocky wrists and agate feet
And thongs of weed upon her forehead grown,
Go search—go meet.

On one whose flesh is like the plume of grain,
Whose throat beneath your palm is wave-soaked sand,
Encroach and thrash until the sheaf is lain,
Till water fills your hand.
By you these creatures will be overtaken,
And what their beds need, you must learn.
And my deep body shall awaken
When you return.



THE BATHER. BY JACK B. YEATS



MARKET DAY, MAYO. BY JACK B. YEATS

N
ene
tion
from
anc
his
mu
hav
I
ma
on
He
asse
in a
rea
tra
of
the
Por
giv
unt
fine
?
bre
in
ger
leo

BOOK REVIEWS

A COURTLY POET

A DRAFT OF SIXTEEN CANTOS. For the Beginning of a Poem of Some Length. By *Ezra Pound*. 8vo. 65 pages. *Three Mountains Press*. \$25.

NOT long ago Mr. Pound galloped up and down the frontier of criticism like an early American general, cursing the enemy, firing his recruits, and embarrassing the fearless with decorations of praise. The gallant fighter appears to have withdrawn from the hubbub; precocious children now mature in black ignorance, the makers of plaster casts grow rich, uncursed. He devotes his retirement no less than his notoriety to music and verse; the music is composed in forgotten modes, for the flute, and the poems have all been cantos.

From time to time a canto, like a block of cumbersome, streaked marble, has appeared in one of the few brave magazines, as if on a pedestal of temporary stucco and obscured by scaffolding. Hearsay has numbered them by the hundred; sixteen are here assembled, with pseudo-childish drawings by Mr Henry Strater, in an awkwardly ostentatious volume. Singly, they astounded the reader with tough magnificence; the group is an almost impenetrable mass, for they give each other little aid. The structure of the individual cantos is too subtle to be enjoyed; or perhaps there is no structure, perhaps this is a rag-bag like *Sordello*. Mr Pound has never been a narrator; as a critic he was rarely able to give an orderly account of an idea; and if they are to multiply until they form an epic, it seems likely to be a labyrinth with a fine, half-materialized ghost for Ariadne.

The epic subject appears to be the birth or births of art; the brevity of perfection; Golden Ages and a present hell. The canto in which Odysseus raises ghosts and that in which the ship's passenger turns into God ("Safe with my lynxes, feeding grapes to my leopards") are very suitably the first; for the whole work's power is

that of an hallucination. The civilized Italian brigands quarrel and erect monuments through several cantos: the rudest diction moving in the most royal processions. Kung utters the principles of Mr Pound's passion in a flawless canto:

"Without character you will be unable to play on that instrument." . . . "When the prince has gathered about him all the savants and artists, his riches will be fully employed."

There follows an intimate hell, more horrid than Dante's, and intolerably up to date, full of names from Who's Who spelled with asterisks. It is a bird's-eye view; there is nothing poignant in the spectacle; the mention of death gives refreshment. The horror is redundant, but verbally sonorous.

The common reader is confused by the names of people (Greek, Chinese, Provençal, and fantastic), by the names of places, by a Tower of Babel medley. Row on row of chiselled heads; exploits and emotions of centuries, all having an air of contemporaneity by comparison with which a newspaper is written in a dead language; dates of first editions mingled with dates of suicides from balconies. In between Tuscans and Greeks drift husks of modern men, husks of their voices, and restless Mongolians "using the long moon for a churn-stick." Mr Pound's scholarship does not leave one prostrate with faith, but it is unimpeachable. Professors may complain, professors have complained; we still prefer living sculpture to the genuine, dead, stuffed animal. He is not quietly erudite—the pedant approaches knowledge with deference; he is knowledge's lover, speaking of it and to it an intimate idiom which is sometimes gibberish. The slurs and telescopic compressions are like those of one man's memory: reminiscences of a poet who has never died, comparing the courts where civilizations were born as confusedly as a true traveller talks of hotels and views.

Though only a "draft" of a fragment, the Cantos are one of the most glorious of those long poems in whose construction common sense takes no part, those poems like cities in a vision, swarming and burning and smoky, which are the glory and affliction of this period. The rhythm is breathless and breath-takingly beautiful. Flaubert was not content until he could deliver his paragraphs at the top of his voice; Mr Pound has perfected a cadence which can only be whispered: Southern music reinforced by hard,

hyphenated nouns and consonants roughly repeated. A sense of intimate gods:

"Salmon-pink wings of the fish-hawk
cast grey shadows in the water,
The tower like a one-eyed great goose
cranes up out of the olive-grove,

And we have heard the fauns chiding Proteus
in the smell of hay under the olive-trees,
And the frogs singing against the fauns
in the half-light."

An account of evocations which is evocation. A lovely animation among old clothes of "museum quality":

"With pheasant tails upright on their forelocks,
The small white horses, the
Twelve girls riding in order, green satin in pannier'd habits;
Under the baldachino silver'd with heavy stitches . . .
Boats drawn on the sand, red-orange sails in the creek's mouth."

Immortal souls with profiles of well-blown glass:

"Eternal watcher of things,
Of things, of men, of passions.
Eyes floating in dry, dark air."

An old wisdom in tears. These are his gifts. His early middle-age may be his youth as a poet; and as a civilizer and defender of the arts, he has already a life-time's ardour behind him. "The blossoms of the apricot blow from the east to the west"; he has "tried to keep them from falling."

GLENWAY WESCOTT

MYTHOLOGICAL SATIRE

THE ISLAND OF THE GREAT MOTHER. By Gerhart Hauptmann. Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir. 12mo. 328 pages. B. W. Huebsch and The Viking Press. \$2.50.

THE Island of the Great Mother is so entirely an entity that we cannot readily recognize its germ idea, or exactly trace the joining of its elements, or their relative contributions to the whole. In some respects it appears a rather devouring sarcasm on the feminist dogma that man is negligible in the developed feminine life. Indeed the ironic accomplishments of the tale, taken with the comeliness of its representation, will doubtless remind many readers of Anatole France; though the telling has not quite, perhaps, the Anatolian celerity. Again, these elements of irony and beauty seem, in other lights, to be parts of an enquiry in collective moral psychology, an examination, aside from sardonic intent, into the origin of mythologies. And not least emphatic in the story is its unitary exhibition of the amorous instinct. Competing instincts, such as hunger and self-preservation, have been eliminated in the removal of their occasions. The beautiful society which is pictured here is situated on a commodious island in the tropical Pacific, amid paradisian serenity, healthfulness, and abundance; and it embodies—at least so the founders thought—the finest components of modern civilization.

Diverse as are its aspects, however, the story is organically composed, around a well-placed centre of structure; and it proceeds by the simultaneous and orderly realization of opposed forces, the outer and inner actions. The outer action is concerned with the physical occurrence of this unique island society, and with its debonair exteriors, and the rich novelty of its surfaces, vistas, contours, and events. The inner contains the less debonair psycho-analytical realities, and the criticism; it is the logical implication, the ironic hidden half, that awaits the over-emphasis of the outer action.

In staple, the outer action consists in a series of alleged maternity-miracles, and their results in the collective psychology of

the one hundred shipwrecked women among whom they occur. For deliberate reasons on the part of the two judicious women who head the colony, paternity of the children by the god, Mukalinda, is accepted as official dogma; and on that basis rises the matriarchal state, with all devices of priesthood, mythology, and taboo; and with, besides—in the megalomania of the extreme high mother party among the women—a great derogation of the masculine principle and an equal aggrandizement of the feminine. It is the intense arrogance of these lovely and reverend mothers that eventually wrecks the matriarchy.

In this outer action, as well as the inner, we seem to have what can scarcely be described except as ironic myth, though it has so unmistakably the evidence of sound conception and competent realization, that we feel such things would happen in this way if they were to happen at all. Or if we call it novel or romance, as it is advertised, it must be as one written in an immense hand, crowded down not easily into the small, sedate pages of usual fiction. The potent stir of this pen seems to demand a greater amplitude than is to be had in fiction; and here and there we find causticism which is like that in ancient satire, and shrewd, enormous touches in the analysis of universal woman. Aside from accomplishments of mind, however, one is bound to remark in Hauptmann a temperament of rather epic magnificence, given to large movements in simple ways. Perhaps the mere thought of his theme, implicit with so much irony and comeliness, set his feeling into a ground-swell, in which he could no more avoid lavishing poeticisms on the outer lustres of his subject, than one can avoid the beating of one's heart. The choice of a tropical island for the setting of his action proved, no doubt, the irresistible invitation to those immense scene-poems that seem always to be dwelling in his mind; at any rate they appear in this instance to have been active in the great heightening of the narrative. And a hardly less sovereign poetry of depiction is heaped upon the passages wherein, as the hearts and persons of his characters flower fully amid the magnificence of his scene, he pictures the exuberance of amorous charm in flesh and blood. Much credit is due the translators for the excellence of their rendering.

The inner action, a psychological consequent of the outer, is the reverse in tendency, and finally overwhelms it. It is to be seen coming into agency in the person of the twelve-year-old Phaon

Stradmann, son of a distinguished architect, and, in the colony, the sole representative of the masculine principle. This rather difficult figure of adolescence is pictured as personally scarcely less than an Adonis, and is also represented, with success, as growing rapidly into maturity and discernment. Though his importance is at first obscured, doubtless with purpose, and he almost disappears from the foreground of attention, we are increasingly aware that his growth into the individuality of a man typifies the growth in force of the inner action, and the impending stalemate of the feminist aggressive.

On his entrance into manhood, the extreme high mother party had succeeded in forcing the annual removal of all boys who have reached the age of five years, from the precincts of the matriarchate. These children were quartered in another part of the island, where Phaon, it is implied, took up their education and governance. With their growth into an adolescent, but emphatically and intelligently male society, is to be discerned the issue of the inner action from anonymity into a formidable counter-crescendo. And the catastrophe is soon reached. The high mother party grows so powerful in derogation of everything masculine but Mukalinda, their puppet divinity, that they finally, and despite the opposition of the more rational and realistic women, effect an egregious public slight upon all flesh and blood masculinity of the island, including even the twelve chosen light-bringers, ordained sons and vicars of Mukalinda, without whom—however the mothers might grudge to admit it—there would be no furtherance of the matriarchate into the future.

When all the men withdraw to an inaccessible part of the island, and the miracles cease, it becomes apparent even to the most dunder-headed of the mothers, in the impending *débâcle* of matriarchal morale, that the worlds of men and women are indissolubly intersphered, and derogation of either turns out to be at the expense of both. But the grasp of this truth comes too late, for bacchantism and hysteria, the dooms of the cherished matriarchy, have come swiftly into being through the frustration, by doltish arrogance, of the great amorous instinct, which was the real, if unrecognized, *primum mobile* of the society.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

THE ORANGE MOTH

BRING! BRING! and Other Stories. By *Conrad Aiken*.

12mo. 240 pages. Boni and Liveright. \$2.50.

IDEALLY considered, the short story is a plot which contains four elements. There is a situation (or event); an emotion which the event calls forth; an idea crystallized from the emotion; finally an action. Most stories follow this outline with surprising fidelity; it is even the standard of the popular magazines, although they have a tendency to emphasize the fourth element at the expense of the other three. In *Bring! Bring!* the action is almost negligible. A boy comes to realize, slowly, the fact of his play-mate's death. A man receives a letter from a stranger, who is dying. Or a drunken woman goes wandering through the rain, crawls into a taxi-cab, and falls asleep. There is no climax, no real conclusion; a chain of obscure causes leads to an emotion which is almost disembodied.

In still another story, Marie Schley visits her dying grandmother and there, at the bedside, remembers her own childhood. She steals away to meet her lover. That evening, in the electric dusk of a theatre, listening to a singer with gold teeth and a cork-blackened face, she feels the ecstasy of abstract surrender. "A delicious feeling of weakness, of dissolution, came over her. Life seemed to her extraordinarily complex, beautiful and miserable."

Imagine the same story as written by another author. Marie, at her grandmother's death-bed, would be overcome with pity, remorse, a sudden respect for the family gods. These emotions would crystallize into the idea of giving up her lover; she would act on the idea. The story would end perhaps in a grim parting, perhaps in a reconciliation with her husband. In Mr Aiken's handling, the idea (third element in the ideal plot) is omitted like the action. Marie is left with a purposeless emotion, unexpressed, drowned in her mind as in a pool of standing water. It is perhaps not difficult to understand why most of Mr Aiken's characters are tormented by the sense of futility and defeat.

They are people who live in boarding-houses and speak in the

terms of a rag melody. They have an income, but forget their antecedents. Their life is one of pure physical sensation. At times they refer to Fichte or Spinoza; they make elegant allusions to Venus "rising out of Duxbury Bay on a good-sized clam shell," but these are only the tarnished last-souvenirs of their classical education. They study and think no longer. Instead they feel, dream, passively accept.

This dangerous passivity, the neglect of logical thought, the distaste for action (growing into a contempt for action): all these are symptoms of the malady which afflicts the more intelligent writers of our time. Their books are concerned with people who drift, accept, surrender to their passions. A strain of inherited agnosticism, applied first to God, then to society, has finally centred in the self. They are palsied with doubt; afflicted, characters and authors, with an atrophy of the will.

And correspondingly the emotions are exalted. Every other element in Mr Aiken's stories becomes subordinate. The first of the elements, even—the situation or event—is altered into something less definite. It becomes a background for emotion: a park where robins sing louder and larger than life, where ducks stand on their heads and trees are green as verdigris. Or observe the city of maggots: "their heads are small and wedge-shaped, and glow with a faint bluish light." Every detail is magnified, distorted by feeling. The story itself becomes a lyric poem, a brief threnody of suffering and delight, almost a chemically pure emotion.

These are a poet's stories. In a world of neat plots, made by experienced mechanics, they have an unprofessional air which does not detract from their effect. They are better, indeed, than Mr Aiken's poems. It has always seemed to me that heretofore his published work has been something less than a measure of the man. The writing was distinguished, the emotions profound, but there was a gap between the two, perhaps a mechanical failure, a failure in the mechanics of expression rather than in those of verse. I can't point to line and stanza, but I might quote from Conrad Aiken's own caricature of a poet who suffered from the same disability in a far more exaggerated manner.

Young Cooke, the hero of *The Orange Moth*, was always trying to write like Pater or De Quincey; to stimulate his talents with yellow or blue paper, with pads and blank books of many shapes,

with red or violet inks. A ridiculous figure; still, his emotions were delicate, his vision clear. He liked to ride on the Elevated and stare through the open tenement windows, where he could see "people moving there, inside, folding newspapers, taking pots from stoves, turning back bed covers, reaching up arms to light the gas. He liked the heavy Jewesses leaning out into the evening, apathetic, their massive breasts spread out on the cool stone, their faces like the faces of oxen. . . . There it was, so close to him, so immediate, yet he could do nothing with it. Some poison in his brain turned it all to dullness, to mud—no, worse than that, to a kind of lifeless simulacrum, a mechanical formula—as soon as he tried to touch it. Oh, God, if he could only get hold of beauty."

He decided, one glutinous summer night, that he was a failure. De Quincey couldn't help him; neither could Pater. He crawled into bed, pulled the sheet over him, and dreamed. "An orange-coloured moth flew heavily in through the window, and settled with wide velvet wings on the opened pages of the blank book. The orange wings covered the two pages completely. He sprang up, shut the book, and the beautiful thing was caught. When he opened the book, he found that the pages were soft orange moth wings; and incredibly fine, indecipherable, in purple, a poem of extraordinary beauty was written there."

Of course the humour of the story is that anybody should try to set a trap for beauty, in blank books of any special shape. Impossible, ridiculous, and yet—would it be too much to say that in this volume, with its atmosphere of drowned emotions, "complex, beautiful and miserable," Conrad Aiken has captured the orange moth?

MALCOLM COWLEY

LAUGHTER AND LIGHT

DARK LAUGHTER. By Sherwood Anderson, 12mo.
319 pages. Boni and Liveright. \$2.50.

MR ANDERSON'S *Dark Laughter* is more than merely his most recent novel. Had it appeared prior to *A Story Teller's Story* one might have looked on it as a résumé in fictional form of the epoch closed by that autobiography. But since it follows the summary and is yet a definitive recasting of the identical stuffs, one is tempted to believe that it expresses more than an era in the author's life: that it sums Mr Anderson, himself.

The time is perhaps ripe for such a summing. Long, long past are the years when this luminous mid-American was hailed by *The Little Review*, *The Seven Arts*, *The Masses*. Distant even are the days when Mr Mencken began to thump his tub for him. Sherwood Anderson has been accepted. It is right that some of the energy which went to beating the door open should now measure what came in.

The materials of his art are well known and well praised; they are assuredly the most authentic to have found their way into our contemporary western novel. What they were in *Poor White*, in the early chapters of the *Memoir*, in the short stories, they are again in *Dark Laughter*. There is no change for better or for worse. Such new matter as the scenes of post-war Paris is so shrewdly rendered into the reminiscence of Americans that it is not new. Even the Quat'z Arts Ball loses its nature of *carnaval gaulois* and becomes the occasion for a Puritan morality. And the heroine, Aline, diverges from earlier heroines of Mr Anderson in naught more essential than the greater number of shoes in her wardrobe and the fact that her father, instead of mining or farming, practises law in Chicago.

On the other hand, there is change in method. Mr Anderson has learned a good deal about the technique of the novel since he wrote *Many Marriages*, his deepest aesthetic effort. Already in *Winesburg*, he had achieved a form for the short story. It was a lambency like slow flame about some stick of action. The episode of the tale was a typical fact of our life; the flame of the tale

was a transposition, into the open, of the flame hidden within that life. And the effect was the thrill of the displacement. In the earlier novels, Mr Anderson expanded directness of telling—the aesthetic fallacy of cumulation: his narrative became a drawl in which the characters floundered and were lost. In *Many Marriages*, he tried his hand at an organic complexity beyond him. He has learned his lesson. *Dark Laughter* has a limited set of characters and the same knot of action of his shorter tales, with the author's lyric ruminance to smoulder all about it. The flame never quite lyrically jets from the immediate scene, being either an interposition of the author's mood or a kindling of some memory of the hero. But at least technically, it is always there.

The book opens with a preparation for a meeting between a man in a factory window and a woman, his employer's wife, waiting below for her husband in the street. The man's "conditions precedent" carry us through the first third of the volume; those of the woman, through a second third; the last hundred pages accomplish the meeting, the coupling, the elopement. The form is a rigid, simple symmetry. At times, the substance goes almost gaseous in the too wide container. But the prose has a meditative rhythm which supports the almost entirely meditative stuff: for this expanse of "conditions precedent" is given not narratively, but in the haphazard retrospect of the man and woman. The prose saves the book; saves the reader from falling through the rather vacuous interstices of the book's psychic action; and at the end eases the reader off, not too exhilarated by so thin a music, yet aware that it has been consistent.

In craft, then, Mr Anderson shows advance; shows indeed maturity. The stuff of this novel is not more than that of many of his ten-page stories. To have given it so wide an adumbration shows that even if Mr Anderson cannot compose a novel, he can sing one. This is an achievement. And it adds to the entire sense of definitiveness urged by the book. Whatever stuff he has for us, Mr Anderson as artist is immature no longer. Whatever the stuffs of his soul, that configuration of them known as Sherwood Anderson is *formed*.

What, then, have we? What nurture have these ten years of digesting Sherwood Anderson obtained us? If *Dark Laughter* is the best embodiment of all his books, we need not go back for an answer: nor is it probable that we need go forward. The hero,

who changes his name to Bruce Dudley, leaves an "intellectual," "story-writing" wife, a "high-brow world," a reporter's job in Chicago, to become for a while a wanderer and a worker. He encounters the dark laughter of the southern negro—an indifferently earth call; he encounters such other primitives as the labourer Sponge Martin, good trencherman and pungent lover; finally he meets Aline. She is wedded to the heir of a wheel-factory in Indiana, and they have met in the chaos of France where he has served as a soldier. She is unhappy with her brittle, successful man, who has given her no child. Dudley's state is not sharply enough defined for pain. It is pictured as spreading like a vapour over the western plains where he has lived. The sharpest precipitates in his vagrant mood are memories of his mother and the Mississippi; of his mother stirring to the glance of unknown men, of the Mississippi flowing to the song of turfy niggers. Now, he and Aline—two clouds of inarticulation—merge. The merger is neither human mystery nor passion. It is rather the inorganic, gravitational shift of two unhinged nebulae upon each other. It is impressive as some mute stellar scene might be impressive, afloat in the vagueness of aeons. As a result of it the ineffectual manufacturer husband is broken. The coloured servants of his house, whom he blanches to face, laugh the high shrill laughter of the negress: "I knowed it, I knowed it, all the time I knowed it." . . . All this couched in a lovely, shuffling prose, with a few brief gleams of faces and of nature, gives you the book perhaps not more unfairly than any résumé must give a lyric.

Two intentions focus it. The coupling and going off of the two gaseously substantiated lovers, together with the defeat of the manufacturer of wheels, is presented as a resolution. And the laughter of negroes serves not as a character within a drama, but as chorus, as moral, and, since at the end it chimes with the elopement, as conclusion. The book indeed is emphatically moral in the sense that its action and tone are throughout made to converge into a generalized judgement of the author. An instance is the rendering of the *life* of the negroes into choral laughter. But ere we get to the moral, let us examine further the event.

It has a resolution, then: a bare sexual resolution, with a bare biological sequel—the promise that Aline at last will have her child. A man and woman, in the slough of inactivity, in the pathos of abulia, couple. There is this altogether carnal let for

the bewilderment of the two human souls. And, as item, there is the husband's propriety and wealth whimpering off in despair. The liaison is not aesthetically treated as a design of lines and forms connoting beauty; nor is it mystically resolved into a glimpse of a real Absolute. It is a physical release for psychic elements: a logically false conclusion. And the negro, watching the triangular dumb-play of his masters, laughs at it; when it resolves, as we have seen, laughs with it. The intimation is forced on us that the white man and woman have at the end reached the negro's level—or, rather, reached an act in harmony with it. And the author's intent is as clearly—here comes the moral—that, high or low, this is the one true level to be reached, the good one. The laughing negro is not a negro at all; he is the healing and resolving norm within the white man's soul.

So Mr Anderson's book steps from its lyric envelope in all the dubious splendour of the romantic plea: it is again the call of "back to the beginning" which for a hundred years has accompanied the *débâcle* of sublimations in our modern world. The difference is merely one of counters. Here the negro is romanticized, as was once the *Natur* of the Germans, the *Peau-Rouge* of the French or, more recently, the "cow-boy" of Dada and the "Hindu" of Los Angeles. Mr Anderson of Chicago and New Orleans exploits the negro as subjectively as if he lived in Munich or were reminting Chateaubriand from red to black. He is not employed as a co-ordinate element of the tale: he is made into a *moral* atmosphere. Symbol of rebuking loam and song, he is of course the negro of a white man paled by his dizziness upon the "heights of culture" and brewing colour for forgetfulness.

The tenuous connexion of this negro with the tragic aspiring black American need not here hold us: nor the fact that this dark laughter is so manifestly white. This is not earth laughing after all: it is too reedy and remote a music. This is a white man's longing for such laughter, his visioning it from deprivation. And its very dimness in the book should prompt us, in our climax of confusion, to know that we cannot "go back." We may dissipate our present confrontations in weak nostalgias that are neither yesterday nor now: or we can go forward.

Such solemn matters the book forces upon us. Mr Anderson is so clearly not writing a *genre* story of Old Harbor, Indiana, or a love-story about a man and a woman. He has given his prose

the testamental accent. He has employed the music of a race, the life of a nation, the strain of a great river to teach a lesson. Dark Laughter is as vaticinative as The Book of Jonah.

Earlier in his career, Mr Anderson discovered that *life* in our world dwelt within confusion; that the strait forms of our inherited past were an exclusion of life, and dead. This discovery in aesthetic guise won him his rightful place as an American artist and made a generation, gasping for breath, rally to his defence. Pregnant chaos was better than dead order. But Mr Anderson's conclusion seems to be to glorify the chaos. Dark Laughter is an *apologia* for the confusion revealed in Winesburg. It is a resolution downward through such channels as sexual release to which a mythic negro chorus, representing Earth, can laugh approval; or backward to the simple purity of a tool-age symbolized by the old craftsman, Martin.

Europe has been expressing the same impotence for a hundred years. Romanticism sprang from the Kantian critique of the mediaeval, that last true European order. Legitimately, it proposed that new elements of consciousness be naturalized in human unity. This required a return to self. And hence, illegitimately, came the romantic plea for human unity in regression. This was as intelligent as it would be to argue, from the cultural necessity of mining underground, that underground was the right place to dwell. And in this sense, the atomism of Benjamin Constant, of the German expressionists, of M Aragon, and of Mr Anderson, based upon a nucleus of self-feeling *beneath distinctions*, must be rigorously opposed to the synthetic atomism of Stendhal, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Gide, whose nuclear unity is an essence of all preceding human values.

We grant with Mr Anderson, of course, that our inherited culture lies in shards about us. We admire him for his elegiac song among the lovely ruins. We understand the comfort of his laughter. But we submit that if we must begin again—grow in that sense primitive again—our new barbarism shall be upon a level which departs from the powers of the dying world. This dark laughter is a call, not to such "higher primitivism," but to the old one; these bare emotional releases represent exclusion of the elements of our chaos, not synthesis of them into a truer order. Mr Anderson's wholeness is a unity by subtraction; our health must be a unity by controlled expansion.

WALDO FRANK

BRIEFER MENTION

THE TALE OF GENJI, by Lady Murasaki (8vo, 300 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$3). Written in the eleventh century, Lady Murasaki's prose classic is marked by a freedom of theme and style like that which has caused Marcel Proust to be accounted bold in the twentieth. *Genji* marches with *Gil Blas* and *Casanova*. As one reads, wonder grows that so honourable an ancestor of the psychological novel has until now remained untranslated.

DECEMBER THE FOURTEENTH, by Dmitri Merezhkovsky, translated by Nathalie A. Duddington (12mo, 319 pages; International Publishers: \$2) is an historical novel of the lofty and abortive Russian revolution of 1825. Merezhkovsky has the rare faculty of making history dynamic, never permitting it to become a mere backdrop against which the actors in the story strut absurdly. In its primitive vigour and poetically visioned reality, *December the Fourteenth* is, as a tale and as literature, a most satisfactory novel.

DOCTOR TRANSIT, by I. S. (12mo, 285 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2) is a conventional novel only in appearance. Essentially it is an attempt to create a new mythology, the mythology of science, personified in the hyperbolical figure of Transit himself. He changes iron into gold, transmutes the sexes, restores lost youth "by an astonishing process of accelerating metabolism." After his death a new religion is formed in his name. . . . The book is remarkable for its metaphors, for its opulent rhythms, and for its revolt, more in action than in precept, against the contemporary "atmosphere of jaded allright."

UNINVITED GUESTS, by J. Jefferson Farjeon (12mo, 362 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$2) has a fresh idea in mystery stories, a good detective, and is neatly written. It plays fair with the reader throughout and the solution is logical and exciting. It is to Mr Farjeon's credit that he refuses to write mystery stories as if they were altogether trash, and his are not.

A HURRIED MAN, by Emanuel Carnevali (16mo, 268 pages; Three Mountains Press: \$3). Poems, essays, stories, and book reviews: practically everything that Emanuel Carnevali wrote is contained in this slender volume. His critical prose is curiously his best; curiously, one says, because he expresses a profound contempt for critics. He writes extraordinary stories; lyrical, uneven, and occasionally superb. As for his verse, it is disappointing. He has the sensitive equipment of a great poet, but something is lacking. He says, "It is form which assimilates the artist," but does not add that the process of being assimilated is more active than passive. Without the activity of conscious labour, nothing remains but brute emotion: violent, tragical, and incomplete.

THE BRAND OF THE BEAST, by Michael Lewis (12mo, 300 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$2) is as horrifying as its title suggests, "a story which thrills" and which, within the limits of its conventional style, is terse and vivid.

DOODAB, by Harold A. Loeb (12mo, 287 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2). From this well-meaning, meaningless book which is not a novel or even a story, one infers that the typical unresourceful man has been discarded by his employers, turned adrift by his wife, and killed by a locomotive. Named in this instance, Henry Doodab, he has dreamed self-exalting dreams of life in the jungle and has been killed; but he has never lived.

THE SELMANS, by V. R. Emanuel (12mo, 372 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$2) presents what purports to be a cross section of Jewish social life in London. Reportorial in style, kaleidoscopic in approach, in so far as it is as tiresome as the particular people it involves, this novel may be said to attain verisimilitude.

PARALLAX, by Nancy Cunard (8vo, 24 pages; Hogarth Press). London and Aix-en-Provence; Paris and Genoa, with breakfast on the Orient Express; philosophy, to the poets of our generation, means changing one's city often, changing one's city in the effort to "thread doubt with belief," while "earth drives on his feet, behind imperious rains." In Florence, Benozzo may be inspected, "with his embroidered princely cavalcades." London is "gulls nailed to the wind above discreet waters." Everywhere the eyes "look deep and see but the eyes again"; the search is futile. As for the poem, it is distinguished by beauty of phrase and a rarer quality which might be called the sense of culture. It lacks organization, but the fault is one of philosophy rather than of technique; how could one organize so blind a pilgrimage toward a grail so nebulous?

SONGS FROM THE ELIZABETHANS, edited by J. C. Squire (16mo, 307 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$1.50). If nothing more, it would mark some height of service to bring together compactly the songs of those who can so choicely fill the ear as Campion, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Ben Jonson, and Nicolas Breton. But besides these the present collection possesses some scores of others, some lesser and many anonymous, it is true, but of nearly all whose singing no more can be said than that it sings most Elizabethanly, and visits the reader with something of the magnificence of heart and voice which is the substance of Elizabethan renown.

NEW WRITINGS, by William Hazlitt, collected by P. P. Howe (12mo, 201 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$2.50). One is grateful to Hazlitt's biographer for presenting with characteristically precise foot-notes and an index, these new later writings in which, resist it as one may, one recognizes a spirit as authoritative as it is unbusinesslike. "Underlit by unquenchable fire," ironically and prepossessingly yet unjustly abusive in his miniature scholasticism, Hazlitt does persuade one, uniformly and with powerful inconsistency, that "all impediments in fancy's course are motives of more fancy."

AMERICAN AND BRITISH LITERATURE SINCE 1890, by Carl and Mark Van Doren (8vo, 350 pages; Century: \$2.50) is a methodical treatise on contemporary writers, with index and suggestions for study: a textbook, in brief, designed for women's clubs and the few colleges which study literature as it has developed since the death of Browning. There are twelve chapters, dealing respectively with the poets, playwrights, novelists, and essayists of America, England, and Ireland. The chapters are further divided into sections, each with a name, a date, a summary, and a judgement. The summaries are capable; the judgements cautious and unimportant. Sometimes the authors carry understatement to the point of falsehood, as when they say of Yeats, "There is perhaps a touch of artificiality and affectation . . . though on the whole he is an excellent artist, and one of the best of the poets who have to be considered in the present book."

EDITH WHARTON, by Robert Morss Lovett (12mo, 87 pages; McBride: \$1) is the second of a series of monographs intended to acquaint the general reader with the lives and writings of certain important living American authors. Mr Lovett's knowledge of contemporary literature, as well as the historical prospective he has always so eminently at his command, fit him admirably for the present task. With the civility, explicitness, and lucidity of the most advanced and liberated university professor, he places Mrs Wharton in the niche in which one feels she is ultimately to remain.

SKIN FOR SKIN, by Llewelyn Powys (12mo, 147 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$2). This unabashed little book, full of quaint delights, "woven close, both matter, form, and style," displays that particular kind of wanton gravity, interlarded with quips and cranks and Chaucerian humours, such as shows the "mettle" of many centuries of English "pastures." Exploiting his personal struggle for life to shrewd literary purpose, the writer of these sly autobiographical pages philosophizes upon his wind-blown straws with such artless-artful charm that it is difficult not to feel that such candid shamelessness, for all its tough banked-up traditionalism, is really a new contribution to English Letters.

BARBER SHOP BALLADS, A BOOK OF CLOSE HARMONY, edited by Sigmund Spaeth, illustrated by Ellison Hoover, foreword by Ring Lardner, with two double-faced phonograph records (16mo, 61 pages; Simon and Shuster: \$2). A collection—with words and music and instructions for singing—of twelve such back-alley favourites as Sweet Adeline, In the Evening, and Down Mobile. The joyousness of this volume, while occasionally it becomes a bit dutiful, is none the less genuine at the core, and testifies that the collaborators, in their talk of "swells, softenings, bursts and hushes," are treating of authentic experiences. There is a kind of homely humanism here, the opportunity for much harmless activity, much energy deflected into blissful yet innocuous channels. But we do not understand how men of such obvious endurance in these matters could have overlooked the coda to Some Folks Say, the gloomy narrative about the bee (the bee) the bee (the be-ee) the little bumble bee.

EL GRECO, by Elizabeth Du Gue Trapier (12mo, 186 pages; Hispanic Society of America: \$3.75) is a chronological record embellished by religious passion and balanced by cautious scholarship. The author's liturgical descriptions of El Greco's canvases are not wholly unnecessary, but her attempt to define the artist's bewildering vision as a compound of Spanish mysticism and Byzantine decoration is far too unsubstantial to satisfy the enquiring student. In no instance does she penetrate the actual working vision of the painter—but this is not a matter for those who interpret the old Greek's elongated figures as symbols leading to heaven.

THE LETTERS OF MARY RUSSELL MITFORD, by R. Brimley Johnson (12mo, 236 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$2). Surely the most pleasing of Miss Mitford's writings, are her letters, in which with delightful freedom she appraises her contemporaries from Coleridge to Mrs Opie. It is difficult in them, to find the woman who seriously wrote such tragedies as *Charles the First*, *Rienzi*, and *Julian*. Her letters, in which her eye is firmly fixed on the substantial side of life, are the ambered fly of this "lady novelist." To paraphrase her own criticism of Anna Seward, one might say that irrespective of the names of the correspondents, one is content that all the letters should bear the signature of Mary Russell Mitford.

MASTERS OF MODERN ART: PISSARRO, by A. Tabarant; **MANET**, by J. E. Blanche (illus., 12mo, 63 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$1.75 each volume). Again we are reminded that France—according to her own authorities—has produced all the modern art worth mentioning. This is an admirable series in every particular, in format, text, price, and illustrations, and it is for American publishers to do as well by native painters. M Blanche, an artist and critic who is never quite at home among the more modern men, finds in Manet a rare and congenial spirit, an aristocrat of the lineage of Velasquez, and though he fails to persuade us that his subject is the great painter he believes him to be, nevertheless he has written more brilliantly of Manet than has any one else, not excepting Zola or George Moore.

THE DAWES PLAN IN THE MAKING, by Rufus C. Dawes (12mo, 525 pages; Bobbs-Merrill: \$6) is a detailed account, largely in diary form, of the research and gradual agreement between nations as to a plan for restoring financial harmony in Europe. Mr Dawes served as chief of staff of eight economic experts accompanying the delegates from America; his book is not a presentation merely of statistics, though he does give a staggering amount of them, but it is a very human account of an effort to lay aside old issues and to compromise between "ought" and "can" in the matter of reparations. One realizes, in reading this book, that Germany, under expert guidance, is going to profit immensely by the care with which these experts build up her manufactures and her market, and that a like care will have to be taken in the countries who ask the payment of their war bills thus, to keep trade balanced in the future. Such a committee as this, with a super-national standpoint, will go far towards establishing balance and good feeling.

THE THEATRE

SO many plays have opened and closed since my return to active duty, that I have not been able to catch up with those I missed before. I can, therefore, give no report on the major activities of Messrs Arlen and Coward, although the whole world seems divided between those who think their plays worth seeing once and those who think them worth seeing a dozen times. What I have seen in a steady attendance of several weeks has not given me too much pleasure. My greatest satisfaction of the month has been outside the theatre strictly conceived—in *THE GOLD RUSH*. Of plays, *OUTSIDE LOOKING IN* and *THE CALL OF LIFE* have had savour and poignance and expert production.

The miracles wrought by bad production are various. The success of *ARMS AND THE MAN* and the failure of *THE TALE OF THE WOLF* both come under this head. I am not a finished Shavian, but I do like *ARMS AND THE MAN*, and I do like a thing to be done well if it is done at all. The Guild production is based on the most superficial conception of what *ARMS AND THE MAN* is about, and the critics were justified in calling the play a rather outmoded satire on militarism, because that is how it is now presented. But if the Guild or the critics had bothered to consult Shaw on the subject, they would have learned that it is a satirical study of the romantic temperament placed in dramatic contrast to the realistic or Shavian temperament; they would have suspected that the most interesting character is the fool, Sergius, and that the relations between him and Raina are surpassingly important. They would hardly have been satisfied with a production in which the climax seemed to be the revelation of rather high suspenders over the protruding stomach of the Major, and in which the genuine intelligence and genuine passion of Shaw were both sacrificed to his equally genuine, but not so significant, wit.

There is no certainty that *THE TALE OF THE WOLF* could have been saved. As *THE PHANTOM RIVAL*, which vulgarized the play, it had a definite focus in the idea that a woman always remains in love with her first lover, that the first image pressed upon the wax is never really effaced, only overlaid. This idea did not

appear in the present version which is said to be much nearer the original; it was left, therefore, as a study in masculine jealousy and feminine dreams. The dream scene was without a thorough-going element of unreality; only spots were grotesque or absurd; and Phyllis Povah was as out of place in the dream as if someone else were dreaming it. Wallace Eddinger was a more attractive, a tidier comedian than I had known him to be; Roland Young, the jealous husband, was extraordinarily good. He had worked into the *rôle* until it had actual character; he gave it modulation and sharpness and change of pace. But a languor, a looseness of direction lay over the whole piece. It failed to crackle or sparkle; it was not light in the Viennese manner, nor profound in the German, nor falsely profound in the Molnar-Hungarian, nor smart in the American. A good play gone wrong, scattered all over the place, and wasting precious talent.

George M. Cohan chose to waste himself in an Anglo-American version of *ABIE'S IRISH ROSE*. I suppose I will never cease to be charmed by his manner on the stage, but I prefer to see him acting, as in *THE SONG AND DANCE MAN*. In *AMERICAN BORN* he walks through, casually; it is all the play needs to keep it going. But what this world needs is more of Cohan at his best.

To continue the list of let-downs: *CRAIG'S WIFE*. Mr Kelly is another of my admirations; in *CRAIG'S WIFE* he had a character more interesting in motive and in power than he had in *THE SHOW OFF*. He skilfully worked his drama in a sort of mystery-play technique, without the actual elements of the detective play and without sacrificing his own material. But I have never been so much in a cloud of verbiage as in this play. It seemed to me that middle-class Americans were always saying, "Things are only susceptible to interpretation by those whose comprehension is susceptible to comprehending." It was turgid and awkward, and the only person who spoke simply was supposed to be a professor of romance languages at Smith.

As a foot-note, I should like to say that I have seldom been so irritated as this year. The cause is a new fad: monotony. I mean in the actual tone of the voice. Nearly every woman I have seen on the stage uses one note all through the play. Thus while they

are all becoming Eva Le Galliennes, Miss Le Gallienne herself breaks out a little from her charmless circle. *THE CALL OF LIFE* again seems to be an outmoded play about militarism; it is actually nothing of the sort. It deals with the murderous hatred which age has for youth, with the exultation of the old in sacrificing the young. The last act falls to pieces, rather; but the first two are intense and beautiful, and superbly directed by Dudley Digges.

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN is so loosely jointed that it cannot fall apart. It is as casual as its tramp heroes; it is jumbled together and it is excellent entertainment. It stops short of being profound; the mock trial doesn't quite come off as a mockery of justice. But perhaps for that reason the play has actually the sense of life, wild and foolish and exciting.

Concerning *THE GOLD RUSH* I am afraid to say much, not because it can be overpraised, but because nothing seems quite adequate to it. For a month I read intelligent reviews of it, and coming then to see it, full of expectation and knowing so many of the finest bits by report, I found it not only better, but different. Judge from that fact that it is another of Chaplin's created works, not a mechanical film. I am not enthusiastic about the run of the plot, but I recognize its value. For the major scenes and for the minor detail I am positively fanatical. It is full of emotion and full of fun. Nowhere have I witnessed such a moving presentation of loneliness as there is in the prospector's entrance to the dance hall, when he stands peeping over the shoulders of the others, into a festivity which is alien to him. You feel his desperate sensation that all these people know and love each other, that he can never be one of them. The fugitive, the wanderer, the lonely man—he is Chaplin's hero, and close to tragedy. The comedy is comparatively delicate; it is amazingly certain, and all of it has the overtone of the imagination which no other film comic seems even to aspire to. *THE GOLD RUSH* is of the type of *THE KID*, and at the moment I feel sure that it is better. There is no weakening in invention, none whatever in proficiency, none in creative power. There is a slowly definable change in direction; and much as I shall miss the older touch, I cannot say that the new direction is a wrong one.

GILBERT SELDES

MODERN ART

THE record ended last spring upon a note of optimism. The last few exhibitions of the season brought forward an unsuspected number of young artists of the sort we label promising. These young artists were not so astonishing in their methods as they were indifferent to methods. What "teacher" taught was forgot or deliberately abandoned, and the main effect of their pictures was of something rollicking. If I understand behaviourism at all, it was lacking. Everything was genuine improvisation like the jokes and songs of a party of returning picnickers. Light, of course. One doesn't expect profundities from picnickers. But irresponsible gaiety is a charming thing in itself, not too frequently met with in these States at present, and indicative of health. The great Goethe, at least, was never too much ashamed of the lyrical passages in his own early history. . . . So it is possible to start the winter in a hopeful frame of mind. It is hardly likely that the unreceptive state of the public at large has already crushed the spirits of these young people, and it is safe to count upon a little more fun from them later on. In the Iowan West, Miss Effie Cherry, once a notoriously bad actress, who played with her sisters, the Cherry Sisters, behind a net in the vaudeville houses, is now running for political office and declaiming against the arts. She actually hopes to win votes by attacking the teaching of art in the public schools. "What do we want to do, have a generation of artists?" she asks with fine scorn. "I don't believe in spending so much time and money teaching our young people a lot of things that will not help them get along in the world." From what I have seen of the teaching of art in the public schools, I fear there is very little danger of our acquiring a generation of artists in that way, but putting that aside as irrelevant, Miss Cherry, it must be allowed, voices the public feeling nicely. All the Mr and Mrs Babbitts in the land look askance upon art, and would view with more alarm a tendency toward it upon the part of one of their offspring than they would a propensity for crime. It might be all right if there were any money in it—but is there? Ah, that's the question!

However, I refuse to be depressed by Miss Cherry and her political programmes. She may banish art from Des Moines, but she can't from New York, not utterly, at least, for with all my proud young acquaintances of last spring rampant, the metropolis of the land will still be first in other things than money, and Des Moines will be relegated to a low position among the cities that cannot produce art.

Just the same, it is a bit irritating that all these western towns should continue to wrap themselves in dullness. What on earth is all their money for, if not to buy art, and to build memorable buildings, and to give handsome rewards to poets? Somebody should shoot Miss Cherry. Just by way of gesture, I mean.

The news of the summer concerned itself for the most part with big business. Des Moines should know that however insignificant the living artist's wage may be, the wretched fellow doesn't have to be long dead before Sir Joseph Duveen is busy with the remains. To be sure I did read somewhere that the great Berlin museum bought a portrait bust in bronze of Mr Jack Dempsey by the Italian sculptor de Fiori, which I thought a great triumph for all concerned, including Mr Dempsey, but not half so much attention was attracted by this modest item as by the cables announcing the results of the Sargent and Gangnat auctions, in London and in Paris respectively. These were the real sensations of the year. The mere sweepings from the Sargent studio brought eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The Gangnat impressionist paintings fetched eleven million francs. Is it not breath-taking? Eleven million francs is a considerable sum even when translated into dollars, though there is no immediate need to translate it, since the Yankees are still as blind as Miss Effie Cherry to the merits of Cézanne, and Cézanne was the chief Gangnat hero. One of his canvases sold for five hundred and twenty-eight thousand francs, exceeding a Renoir which brought five hundred and five thousand francs. This is to laugh, of course. Everything connected with big business is apt to be farcical. Young believers seem to have been thrilled by these Renoir-Cézanne prices, finding in them the justification for their enthusiasms, but cynics profess to see something incongruous in this artificial rush to the Rembrandt heights. As in the game that was played with the German marks after the war, it will

be found that a limit can be reached, though ardent collectors of art that has become classic apparently figure that it cannot. Understand there is no scepticism as to Cézanne and Renoir. Their merits are incontestable. But there is something revolting in the modern necessity to prove virtue in dollars.

HENRY MCBRIDE

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

IN the first stages of a career, Dane Rudhyar stands with the composers pushing the enmired machine of music where the weight lies heaviest. The majority of his tumultuous and mysterious piano Moments, the most recent of his works, release a definite pathos. The feeling is strongly religious and legitimate in the age of steel. Experiences of the great circling impersonal life flash through the achieved pieces, "what was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be" seen in the painful, ecstatic, and fleeting moments of birth into the vaster day. In instances, the quick minutes take shape in expressions of barbaric and machine-like power. In others, they come as gropings into darkness, stirrings of blind hunger passive and submissive. Sometimes the quiet tides of the abyss move stilly, the waters before the spirit brooded over them. Sometimes fires stream upward with joyous vehemence changing worlds in their fierce ascent. Occasionally, in a certain number of the Moments, the spark is faint, the contact vague. These inferior pieces irritate with the monotonous hysteric aspiration and sick yearning characteristic of much unsuccessful "cosmic poetry." The failures are exceptional. The great number of Rudhyar's preludes and poems are filled sufficiently with the power, wild joy, and movement of the impersonal state to give it expression and float us on its tides. This new music qualifies as part of the contemporary spiritual life.

The uncommonness of pathos of a similar intensity is the weakness of the body of ultra-modern music. Without the pathetic, music can have no force. The epochal change of sensibility in combination with the general exhaustion having dried the source, the incidental makeshifts—over-production of the ironic, the satiric, and the grotesque; attempted substitution of surface feelings for feeling; conception of music as a mechanism to be taken apart and put together again upon a formula; introduction of facts of personality and of transient emotions—have not satisfied and indeed cannot satisfy the human need. Talent and audiences not previously disaffected by the universal frost-bite have been disaffected by this poverty of expression. Rudhyar none the less has

found himself accepting creative responsibility. Affiliated by birth and training with the generation of new French composers which has discovered no frank pathos and loudly preferred ironic and anti-lyric forms, he has met hours of clarity, and found himself in the presence of positive forces since the beginning of his American residence. The first of his personal pieces, *Ravishments* (1918), *Dithyrambs* (1919), *The Surge of Fire* (1920), possess the musical qualities provoking direct feeling. Scriabinesque and tintured with literature though they are, they sing and sustain an architecture of tones. The tone is passionate, and the building generous. It is significant that it was not Stravinsky, the great influence of the young French school, but Scriabine who focused young Rudhyar's creative impulse with his ritualistic poems. And the manuscript of *Moments* merely reveals a success in registering the clear periods more distinguished than any hitherto befallen the composer. If other composers possibly maturer than Rudhyar are likewise producing a pathetic music, in aspects larger and more positive even than his, neither their number nor their successes are sufficiently overwhelming to keep this new recruit from an unfavourable part from rousing wonder; besides, the recent experiments of the young Franco-American show much of the indissoluble combination of the traditional, and the original, personal, and timely which rouses wonder in very years of fecundity. They continue a high line of music from where the past snapped it off.

Again a European has discovered a favourable environment in America. Notwithstanding its inhabitants, the "mountains of my native land" are strong! The original, personal, timely transformation of the ecstatic Scriabinesque piano-style produced by Rudhyar at the close of his first ten years of American residency, wears certain characteristics ultimately American. The better of the *Moments*, the unnamed second and third of the first cycle, and *Reaching Out*, *The Gift of Blood*, *Zodiacal Birth*, *King of Kings*, and *Moon Ritual* of the second cycle, bring together with the traditional tender, shadowy, and sombre lyricism and flighted beat, a sharpness of attack, a forceful spareness of utterance and rigidity of ponderous volumes of sound uncommon to the aristocratic expression from which they spring. Although a force and nudity of utterance related to this austere machine-like edge exists in the later Scriabine, it exists invariably softened by a comparative

opulence of harmony and sinuosity of movement. Rudhyar is to be credited with a genuine innovation. Certainly, Ornstein's earlier piano moods, impressions, and dances show similar qualities, mixed as they are with turbulence of movement and turgidity of sound. Contemporary orchestral writing fairly bristles with them: Strawinsky and Varèse, and in second line Ruggles, Prokofieff, and certain of the Six, have achieved shining pages with the "hard gemlike cutting of the Greek." The distinction of Rudhyar's musical art flows from the achievement in the medium of the piano of passages of a sonority at once slender and charged with force, comparable to the significant pages of modern orchestration; and from the earnest of a fluency in the modern style contained in it. Limited in the range of his ideas, and burdened with literary and theosophic conceptions, he nevertheless moves about in the spare, rich, and metallic style with a naturalness and effortlessness that show him at home. Within the small compass of his Moments, there are strong accents at once rhythmical and precise and free and full, and devoid of the mechanical quality of much of Strawinsky's. There are strong contrasts, nervous and perfectly legitimate changes of mood, sonority, and beat: sudden necessary accelerations and agitations, and equally sudden retardations and calmings. There are full and prodigiously extended chords without thickness; thunderous effects gotten from a single unsupported voice—No. 2 of the first cycle has fine examples; extreme delicacies of the melodic line twisting in mordant-like figures—the tense and penetrating Reaching Out supplies a capital illustration. The precise and bounding rhythms, the many *staccato* and *martellato* notes call for gong-like and metallic sounds; Zodiacal Birth demands piano roars to be gotten only by striking chords of black keys with the entire forearm, after the manner of Rudhyar's Californian neighbour, Henry Cowell.

It is not beside Ozymandias in the Egyptian sand, but beside certain primitive American things made in the arid Southwest, that the grandiose clangours and stony weight of such a Moment as King of Kings demand a place. There is excessive timidity in refusing to recognize Rudhyar's momentary freedom on the austere stylistic plane, and the rigid volumes and barbarous power of his rich affecting music, as products of the American soil. The spirit of the Amerind had the austerity. The Aztec had the rigid

barbarous power, before him. The very transplanted life we live is permeated with both. The popular expressions, jazz and movies, contain them in a rudimentary form. Under the lace of inorganic borrowed ornamentation, the mountainous American architecture shows them, and recently they have begun creating a painting, a prose and poetry in their keen likeness. The American plains awaken a kind of grandiosity which the Indians expressed in the picturesque cosmic names they gave themselves; and poets of the cast of Carl Sandburg are moved unconsciously by vague but similar impulses. Doubtless, as Nietzsche noticed, the testimony of composers concerning themselves and their works is not exquisitely reliable. None the less, Rudhyar's personal feelings about the potentialities of American life and the divinity of the land, freely expressed in his letters, his talk, his essays and poems, are worthy of scrutiny for their corroborative witness. To us, Dane Rudhyar's work, in its form and the pathos exhaled by it, in its weaknesses and strengths, bad literature and realizations alike, presents itself quite simply as inspired with the unconscious reality of America. It has analogies in the life of the Pacific seaboard, where they look still further to the West and feel Buddha near. It has analogies not only there. It has them wherever men feel the presence of a new god that is being born, an American god; not the old jealous, fighting, egotistical Jehovah and his suffering, expiating, self-sacrificing son; but a spirit of fire that opens all individual forms, and purifies and merges all souls together, flushing the hills to scarlet, bursting the earth with corn, dancing, and releasing souls in dancing; the god of old American writers—Whitman with his song of the open road, Melville with his wild laugh writing the tragedy of the god of evil, hate, and retribution; the god of the newcomers, too—warm Mr Anderson hearing hallucinating black laughter and the throb of Dionysiac life beneath the stupid crust of the republic; sad Mr Eliot freighted with a god periodically mysteriously defunct; young Mr Cummings intoxicated with a pussy-footed god who cannot quite get the step; the number grows with every year. It is the intuition strong in these men that lives in Rudhyar. His beauty and theirs flow from a common apprehension; and with theirs his art composes a single ritual.

PAUL ROSENFELD

A LETTER

Prerow,
Germany.

October 14th, 1925.

The Editors of THE DIAL.

Mesdames et Messieurs:

I know not which one of your little covey of editors knocked together your esteemed Comment for October. I do find, however, startlingly, myself leading off:

"A gentleman who has lived abroad considers that the two books most talked of in Germany since the war are *The Downfall of Western Civilization*, by Oswald Spengler and Hermann Keyserling's *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*—books, that is, written in German and published recently—talked of, that is, by the public 'which corresponds to the American public of H. G. Wells.' Indeed our informant has been heard to refer to Count Keyserling as the German H. G. Wells, by which he meant perhaps that Wells, brought up as a nobleman of Eastern Europe, could have become Keyserling. On the other hand it seems unlikely that Count Keyserling brought up in England would have become as breezy as all that, and it would perhaps be more reasonable to compare him to Havelock Ellis, with whom he shares not only optimism and a complete indifference to the terrors of platitude, but a wonderfully fluent habit of generalizing."

When, on the occasion of my recent sojourn in your States, I had the honour of being very kindly trapped into dinner and conversation at your Publication's offices in Thirteenth Street, New York, I was not aware my well-meant informative chit-chat was to be publicly quoted *à propos* two so wide-moving phenomena as Oswald Spengler and Hermann Keyserling. The former was, a year or two ago,¹ very justly put in his place by your own German Correspondent, the always wholly laudable Thomas Mann.

¹ THE DIAL, December 1922.

The latter I have myself heard (in the brilliant company of your dramatic critic, Mr Gilbert Seldes) lecturing in an agreeably *svelte* and Muscovite manner to an audience of (to judge by their appearance) Cambridge, Massachusetts, fringed ladies and innocent outdoor-smelling men of medicine from Boston in a tapestried banquet-hall of the *Burg*, or Imperial Palace, Vienna, Austria. One does not recall exactly what the Count said: one recalls only that everything trotted out was, for a Count, pleasantly forward-looking. And one recalls, more importantly, that Mr. Gilbert Seldes was not pleased.

But to come to my, or rather *your*, point. When I spoke of this Count Keyserling's social influence in Central Europe as making of him a sort of "German H. G. Wells," I emphatically did *not* mean "that Wells, brought up as a nobleman of Eastern Europe, could have become Keyserling." No amount of bringing up could have made Mr Wells anything but what he so enormously, annually, is. Still less could one who has observed this burnished, if peripatetic, Count from a front-row seat, and one who, to boot, is not unacquainted with the works and genius of his cousin,¹ the *great* Count Keyserling,—still less could such an one believe that any one bearing that burnished name, that any one born to the at once austere and sultry inheritance of the ancient masters of the Baltic Provinces, that he, having been transplanted as an infant to a Bromley cradle and "brought up in England," "would have become as breezy as all that." Men of the same breed, gentlemen of the same quality of feather, as Uncle Thilo, Graf von Elmt,² don't get, on howsoever early provocation, "breezy." No Caesar, and no Caesarling, is, even to-day, that.

¹ On your funny page, the one where you print your Notes on Contributors, you honour (in this *DIAL* for October 1925) your new Contributor, Count Eduard von Keyserling, with four lines. Apart from the dates of his birth and death you find nothing so important to say about him as that he was "a brother of the philosopher, Count Hermann von Keyserling." May I be permitted to remind you that he wasn't? The fact is that the contemporary writer Count Hermann von Keyserling possesses the distinction of being a first cousin to Count Eduard von Keyserling, the most distinguished of all German writers of prose fiction, almost the only German practiser of that art of a quality comparable to that of the supreme masters of France and of Russia, and to that of Jacobsen the Dane. So, as Mr Seldes would say, "That's that!"

² *THE DIAL*, October 1925.

I meant merely what I said, that this proportion roughly ¹ holds: that as Mr H. G. Wells is to the reading-public of America, so is Count Hermann Keyserling to the more buttoned reading-public of Germany. Now it does not require a very profound knowledge of the occult science of mathematics to deduct from this proportion that the quantity denominated "Count Hermann Keyserling" is not equivalent to the quantity denominated "Mr H. G. Wells." Unless an editor of *THE DIAL*, with his head in the sand, assumes the reading-public of America to be equivalent to the reading-public of Germany. That it is *not*, I had myself taken for axiomatic. . . . Nor when I say that Theodore Roosevelt occupied socially the nearest American equivalent to the social position in the late Germany of the late Kaiser, do I say that the in many ways admirable Theodore Roosevelt brought up in Potsdam would have become so boobish "as all that." I say merely that his position of energetic ascendancy among the more high-flying political and social forces of his own time and people was our nearest democratic equivalent to the energetic, if bastard, ascendancy of another, if more buttoned, high-flyer.

By all means "compare him to Havelock Ellis" and be as "reasonable" as, being a *DIAL* editor, you oddly can. But when you write that "he shares" with Havelock Ellis "not only optimism and a complete indifference to the terrors of platitude, but a wonderfully fluent habit of generalizing," don't imagine he doesn't share these virtues also, and each in a highly exemplary degree, with the brown derby-hat of Mr Herbert G. Wells of Bromley, Kent. And don't kid yourself into thinking that Count Keyserling is, like Havelock Ellis, a man capable of important intellectual work; or, still less, that Count Keyserling, the School of Wisdom pet of all Central Europe, thereby occupies a social position akin to that of the aloof, ascetic, and indefatigable Havelock Ellis. . . . And did it occur to you that if Count Keyserling (of Slavic grandmother and physiognomy and manner, but of most benevolently German inclinations, culture, and fame)—that if he were to be spoken of as "the German Havelock Ellis," then, as corollary thereto, Havelock Ellis would have thrust upon him, willy-nilly, the rôle of the "*English* Count Keyserling"? And where in the

¹ Editor's Note: Very roughly, even for International Dial Chit-chat.

Lord's name would he get his *English* from? The bulging pockets of Mr Herbert G. Wells? No, the author of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* is far too sublimated a being for handy use in such international chit-chat as this. . . . Mr H. G. Wells, on the other hand, while catering to the same modern hankerings as does this widely-travelled and widely-read Count, this (if I may be permitted to coin a phrase in his own deft language)—this polished and aristocratic *Reisender in Kulturangelegenheiten*,¹—Mr H. G. Wells contrives to retain certain peculiar hirsute, low-browed, and aggressively pragmatical moral and physical appendages which make of him the amusing insular pendant to that bland, blond, roaming Continental Figure. Or so at least it seems to me.

Might I venture, in closing, to observe that your last paragraph, although as befits the paragraph of a young man (in my ignorance as to which one of you editors the writer is, I grant the writer the nobler sex)—of a young man apparently writing from Number 152 West Thirteenth Street,—although fairly bristling

“Bright shoots of everlastingness”

was yet, at first glance, to me, in this less electrical air of Europe, not immediately consecutive in its illumination? The wiring might have been more generous. But I do find that, like the run of your editors, this young gentleman does write intelligently, if not always, to us outsiders, to us Europeans, at first shock intelligible daylight.

Why refer to me as “*a gentlemen who has lived abroad*”? Don't I?

I am, my intelligent *mesdames et messieurs*,
Your Obedient Servant,

THE EDITOR

¹ Editor's Note: This goes too far. But in the right direction.

ets
he
in
the
oes
be
ned
G.
and
ich
nd,

ph,
nce
the
ber

ope,
ring
n of
, if
ligi-

d'?

OR